

JANUARY 19, 1923

No. 903

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FORTUNE WEEKLY.

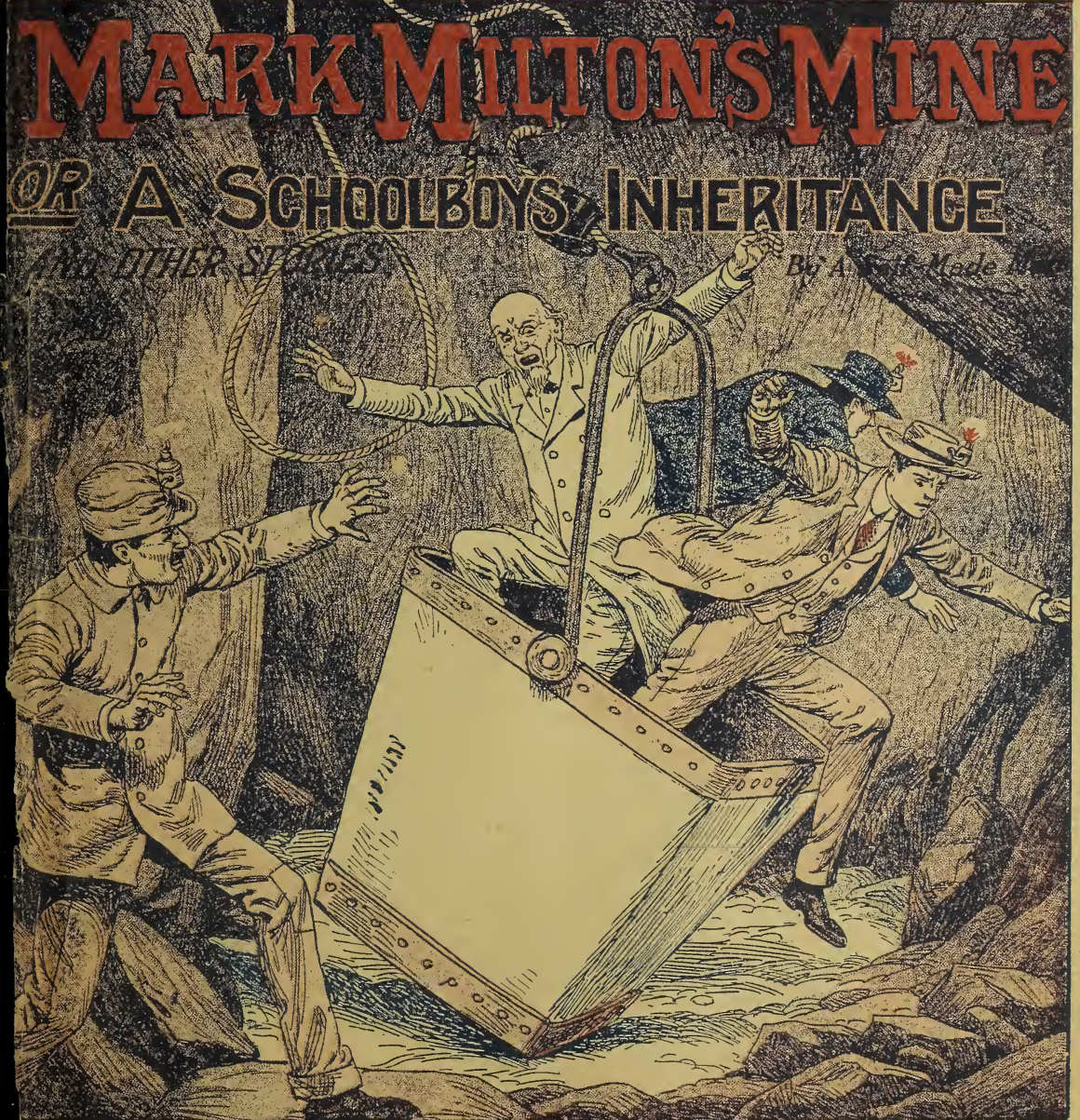
STORIES OF BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY.

MARK MILTON'S MINE

OR A SCHOOLBOY'S INHERITANCE

AND OTHER STORIES

By A. F. F. F. F.



The tub had almost reached the bottom of the shaft when the rope broke, throwing Mark and his companions out. Riley was standing in the shaft looking on, and uttered an oath as he observed the failure of his plan to do away with the young mine owner.

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FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY

Issued weekly—Subscription price, \$3.50 per year; Canada, \$4.00; Foreign, \$4.50. Harry E. Wolff, Publisher, Inc., 760 West 23d Street, New York, N. Y. Entered as Second-Class Matter, October 4, 1911, at the Post-Office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879.

No. 903

NEW YORK, JANUARY 19, 1923

Price 7 Cents

Mark Milton's Mine

OR, A SCHOOLBOY'S INHERITANCE

By A SELF-MADE MAN

CHAPTER I.—Dan Macraisy and His Pal.

"Half a year to-day, by the notches I've cut in this horse-trough I've been boy-of-all-work at this roadhouse, and hang me, Sally, if I see what I've gained by it," said Bob Reynolds, in a discontented tone, as he emptied the fourth pail of water into the trough which he had brought from the well in a corner of the yard at the rear of the house.

"Gained by it!" ejaculated Sally Thompson, who officiated as maid-of-all-work at the roadhouse, which was no more than might be expected of a poor relation of Mr. and Mrs. Gummidge, who kept the road-house, which stood on the cliff road, running through a sparsely settled district, cut up into farms, between two Maine seacoast villages, one of which—the one which was just in sight two miles away—was called Sparbolt, and fringed the inner curve of a small, partly landlocked bay, the waters of which at that moment flashed in the rays of the setting sun. "Why, didn't you tell me two days ago that you had gained ten pounds?"

"Ten pounds!" sniffed Bob. "What's ten pounds?"

"Ten pounds is a lot for a boy. I wish I could say I had gained half as much, and I've been here more'n two years."

"Why don't you eat more?"

"I eat all I get. It ain't the fault of not eating."

"What is it, then?"

"Too much work. I'm a regular slave."

"Ain't I a slave, too?"

"You! Not by no means. You have an easy time of it 'longside of me."

"I have? You're dreaming, Sally. Don't I get up at five in the morning with the dickey birds, and—"

"Ain't I up at five, too?"

"S'pose you are. It's healthy for a little girl like you to get up early. It makes you grow, and you need it. Now, I'm seventeen and almost a man."

"You won't be a man for five years yet."

"Five years! Where did you learn to count? I'll be able to vote in less than four years. Then I'll be a man."

"Well, I'm only one year younger than you. I could vote in five years."

"Women can't vote, you chump."

"I'll bet I could vote as good as you," cried Sally, with a toss of her head.

"Pooh! You wouldn't know the first thing about it. Women don't know anything about politics."

"What do you know about it?"

"I know all I want to know. I'll bet you don't know who's President of the United States."

"Theodore Roosevelt."

Sally was right, for Roosevelt had just succeeded to the presidency on the recent death of William McKinley, a fact which will give the reader an idea of the date of this story.

"Well, you don't know who's governor of this State," said Bob.

"I'm not worrying about it. Do you know?"

"Of course I know."

"Who?"

"Never mind. You're only a girl and don't need to know about such things."

"You don't know! You don't know! You don't know!" cried Sally, clapping her hands gleefully, and dancing about.

"I do know, but I ain't telling everything I know," growled Bob.

"You're only a bluffer. You've gained ten pounds in six months because you eat like a pig and do as little work about the place as you can."

"Don't you insult me, Sally Thompson! I won't stand for it."

"What'll you do?" asked Sally mischievously.

"I'll tell my friend Mark Milton when he comes over. Now what are you blushing about?"

"I ain't blushing," protested the little girl, in some confusion.

"Yes, you are. Your face is as red as a peony."

"It's the sun."

"Sun be jiggered! You're stuck on Milton; but you needn't be. He's a gent and wouldn't look at a common girl-of-all-work like you."

"That's right. Sneer at me because I'm an orphan, and haven't any home but this place with my mother's cousin, which isn't a real home, because I have to work like a nigger from morning till night," cried the girl, the tears springing into her pretty eyes. "That's brave of you, Bob Reynolds. And you expect to be a man, and vote, in four years."

"I take it back, Sally. I didn't mean to hurt your feelings. Maybe Milton does think something of you," said Bob, in a penitent tone. "He's the finest boy that walks on two feet," continued

Bob energetically. "There's nothing stuck-up about him. He treats me just like a friend, though he's as superior to me as a racehorse is to a huxter's nag. That's the kind of fellow I like to run across. What I wouldn't do for him isn't worth talking about."

"I like to hear you talk that way, Bob," said Sally, wiping her eyes. "You have feelings after all."

"Sure I have. I may say hard things to you, Sally, but I wouldn't let anybody else do it. I'd punch 'em in the face," said Bob, squaring off at an imaginary adversary.

"Wouldn't you really, Bob?" said the girl, with a smile.

"Bet your life I would. I'd—hello! who's coming up the road?"

"A man, and a boy."

"I see it's a man and a boy. Pretty free-and-easy looking chaps, don't you think?"

"I'll have to run in, and you'd better finish filling the trough, for if they should stop here your services will probably be needed."

"The man might stop for a drink at the bar, but as the village is only two miles off, they're not likely to stop here for supper, for they have plenty of time to reach Sparbolt."

Sally ran into the back yard and disappeared through the kitchen door. Bob looked up the road at the two strangers. The boy was lagging behind as if he was tired. He was dressed in a cheap suit and wore a cap set rakishly over one ear. The man was much better dressed. His face was smoothly shaven and tanned by the weather. His eyes were rather shifty, and the expression of his face was in keeping with his eyes. He looked like an Irishman, and he whistled off and on as he came along. Bob did not wait for them to arrive, but went for another bucket of water. The man stopped at the water-trough and looked at the road-house.

"Peter Gummdidge," he muttered, reading the sign over the door. "It's port we've struck at last. It's about time, faith, for I've nary a shot in the locker. I wonder if Peter will remember me? It won't be my fault if I don't prod his recollection. Sure he was a decent pal in his day, and we always stuck together like a pair of peapods. He appears to have come up in the world. So much the better for you, Dan Macraisy—Mr. O'Connor, I mane. If there was a listener around I might have put me fut in it, like the devil's imp, Jimmy Twitcher, that's forever behind like a cow's tail. I was a fool to take him in tow, and now I have him, it's afraid I am to shake the young villain, for he'd be sure to slip his gab, and that might put the police on me track, as well as get himself in limbo. Where the dickens is he now? Oh, there he is, sitting foreninst the hedge as if he owned the road. The devil burn the fellow! Jimmy—Jimmy Twitcher, is it coming ye are or not?"

The lad addressed as Jimmy Twitcher got up with an effort and came on.

"Now, Dan, vot's the use a 'urrying' a chap ven 'is legs is that tired that—"

"Ye young reprobate!" cried Macraisy, seizing the boy by the arm and shaking him. "Haven't I told you not to call me Dan in public, but Mr. O'Connor? Do ye want me to squeeze the wind out of you?"

"Blow the vind! It comes in 'ere at the back of me neck and goes hout through this 'ere 'ole 'ere in me helbow as if me jacket vos a public thoroughfare. Vot did you vant to take this 'ere road along the cliffs for ven ve could 'ave taken the hother von and been more comfortable?"

"Always grumbling, you young villain! Faith, it's amazed I am that I stand so much gab from ye. One of these fine nights when we're alone on a country road I'll forget meself and put a hole through that sconce of yours."

"Blow me tight, vot a glorious death that would be, to be scragged by an 'igh tober like Dan Macraisy, who's vanted by the bobbies for heverything from 'ighvay robbery down to—"

"Blame you! Will you be quiet? Don't you see where we are?"

"Vell, vot of it? I honly vispered me sentiments."

"Look on that sign."

"Vell, I'm a-lookin'."

"You remember me telling you about me old pal, Peter Gummdidge, don't you?"

"Vot, you don't mean to say 'e's the howner of this 'ere 'ouse?"

"He is."

"Then dash my vig, we've landed on our feet. I begin to feel a svell meal insinervatin' itself under me veskit—the first I've 'ad since ve left Bostin. Vot luck! Let's go in and interduce ourselves vidout loss of time. Me stomach is that hempty it's full of vind like a balloon."

"One minute. There may be strangers inside, so we've got to be cautious, do ye mind that. Remember, you villain, that my name is O'Connor, and that I'm a gentleman of leisure, wid money, traveling for me health, and that ye are a poor relation I've taken in tow out of the generosity of me heart. That's your story now, so see that ye stick to it, or by the piper that played before Jericho, I'll be the death of you, which would save the hangman a job one of these fine days."

"Don't worry, Dan—Mister O'Connor, vich I meant to say, with a fine meal in sight I von't say nothink I 'adn't houghter."

"See that ye don't. Now follow me in."

"Like a bird," said Jimmy, and the rascally pair entered the public room of the road-house just as Bob brought another pail of water to the trough.

CHAPTER II.—Gummdidge Meets His Old Pal.

There was no one in the public room of the road-house when the disreputable twain walked in with all the assurance in the world. Macraisy pounded on the bar with one of his fists. No one responded.

"Are they all dead here, or is it dafe they are?" ejaculated the Irishman, staring at the back door. "Go to that door and thump on it, do ye hear?" he added, addressing his companion.

Jimmy walked over, and was about to pound on the door, when it opened and Sally appeared in the opening.

"Oh, crickey, vot a purty gall! How are you, miss? Ve—Mr. O'Connor and me—are lookin' for the landlord of the 'ouse. Vill you kindly let him know as 'ow a couple of werry respectable travelers vishes to sample 'is 'ospitality?"

"Mr. Gummidge is out in the barn. If you want drinks, I can serve you," said the girl, starting for the bar.

"Vell, I wouldn't mind drinkin' to them bloom-in' heyees of yours, miss," grinned Jimmy, "if Mr. O'Connor is villin' to stand treat. I'm honly a poor relation of 'is, travelin' vid 'im hout of the generosity of 'is 'eart. 'E's von of them real gents—toffers, they call 'em on the other side—vot you read about, who's ininvestigatin' the country for the benefit of 'is 'ealth."

Sally turned up her nose at Twitcher and presented herself before Macraisy.

"What can I do for you, sir?" she asked.

Dan regarded her with an admiring eye.

"Are ye Peter Gummidge's daughter, may I ask?" he said.

"No, sir. What will you have to drink?"

"Then it's the bar maid ye are."

"I'm the housemaid. I attend to the bar when Mr. Gummidge is away or busy outside."

"And is Mr. Gummidge away at present? What a pity! Sure it's an old frind of him I am, and he'd be glad to see me, sure he would. When do ye expict him back?"

"He is not away, sir. He's busy out in the barn. If you particularly wish to see him I will tell him."

"Do so by all means, me charmer. Tell him Mr. O'Connor, an old friend, is waiting to shake hands wid him, and renew old memories."

Sally said she would, and started for the door. Jimmy had, in the meanwhile, subsided into a chair. He looked longingly at the corner of the bar on which stood a plate of cheese, another of crackers, and a third of sliced beef. As Sally shut the door after her, he followed her with his eyes. Then he looked at Macraisy, who was leaning upon the bar with his eyes on the road. The way to the free lunch appeared to be clear, and Jimmy took instant advantage of it. He glided over to it and helped himself with the avidity of a hungry boy.

"Oh, mother!" he breathed. "Vot a helegant lay-hout. If I honly 'ad something to drink now, I'd be as 'appy as a clam at 'igh vater."

Then Macraisy turned around and looked at him.

"What are you doing, ye villain?" he cried.

"Heatin'. Me innards are that hempty the valls of me stomick was on the p'int of fallin' in, like a 'ouse 'ose underpinnin' vos shaky. Now if you would stand for a mug of 'arf-and-'arf, you'd do the right thing, Dan—Mr. O'Connor, I meant to say."

"Get back to your seat before Gummidge comes or he'll think you're robbing him."

"Vy, I'm only ministerin' to the vants of nature," protested Jimmy, clinging to the corner of the bar, for he hated to leave the banquet.

"Sit down!" roared Macraisy, in a threatening tone.

Jimmy swept a bunch of meat and crackers into one of his capacious pockets and glided back to his chair. At that moment Peter Gummidge entered the room. He had a smooth face, an easy-fitting suit and an air of moderate prosperity. He came forward to greet the caller who claimed to be an old friend. The name O'Connor, however, carried no recollection with it. He could not help wondering who the man was, and under

what circumstances of the past they had been friends. He passed around behind the bar, and then Macraisy looked at him.

"Mr. O'Connor, I believe," he began, and the next words he was about to utter died on his lips.

There was sthat in his visitor's eyes which recalled the man's identity, and he turned pale.

"Dan Macraisy!" he gurgled.

Dan grinned.

"Shake, Peter. It's Dan, sure enough, though for reasons which ye may guess, I'm masquerading under the name of O'Connor—it's safer. It's glad I am to see ye once more after six years of separation. But what's the matter with ye? You don't look happy. Do ye doubt me identity?"

"No, no," cried Gummidge hastily.

"Thin shake, man!"

"No, no; we must be strangers."

"Strangers, is it? Sure it's joking ye are. Ye can't have forgotten how ye grasped this old limb years ago, as if your heart were in your hand, and vowed ye'd share me good or evil fortune. And to prove it ye stuck by me till I was pinched for the Golding job, which ye had the good luck to slip out of yoursilf, the more power to ye, for a smart chap ye proved yoursilf at the time, and that was the last we saw of each other till me lucky star guided me to ye ag'in, and I find ye proprietor of a house of entertainment, and it's mesilf that congratulates ye on your good fortune."

Gummidge, clearly ill at ease, stared fixedly at his old pal, whom he had hoped never to set eyes on again. Jimmy Twitcher was not such a dummy but he saw that his companion was not so welcome as he had anticipated. Fearing that their stay would be brief, and that he would lose the banquet he had been figuring on, he decided to slip away and see what he could pick up about the house in a quiet way, for Jimmy was a most accomplished sneak thief—that being as high as his talents soared, though he often dreamed of accomplishing a burglary or highway robbery some day when he grew older and more experienced. With that object in view the young crook glided over to the back door and vanished through it like a shadow flitting across a patch of sunshine.

Look you, Macraisy—I vowed that when blinded by guilt; but I've seen my error, and have turned over a new leaf."

Macraisy stared at him in astonishment.

"Ye have turned over a new leaf—you have! Is it draming I am or do I translate your words aright? Why, man alive, ye were as fine a high tober as iver stood on two fate. Faith, it's gammon ye are giving me, Peter Gummidge. Turn over a new leaf, bedad! It isn't in ye, no more than it's in a leopard to change his spots. I'd as soon suspect mesilf of turning parson as ye or becoming honest."

"It's true," replied Gummidge, in a hoarse whisper.

Macraisy gave him a hard, unbelieving look.

"May I take the liberty of an old friend and ask ye how this miracle has come about? Sure, it's flabbergasted I am to hear it from your own lips."

Gummidge hesitated and cast an uneasy look toward the door. Macraisy noticed his action and looked at the door, too, but it was shut.

"In Hivin's name, man, what's the matter wid ye? Ye're as changed as a lobster after it's been b'iling in a pot. Speak, for it's puzzled I am entirely."

"I'm sorry you have come here, Dan," said the landlord, in a troubled voice. "I can't forget that once we were old friends—pals, and perhaps for that reason my heart warms toward you; but you must go—for do you understand?" he added, with energy. "She must not meet you."

"She! Who do ye mane?"

"My wife—as fine a woman as ever lived."

Macraisy whistled.

"So that's the way the wind blows, is it?" he said. "There's a woman back of it, eh? I might have suspicioned it, for the sex have always been the ruination of man from the days of Adam down. So ye are married?"

"Yes."

"Then it's my sympathy I extind to ye. How did it happen, me old friend?"

"Soon after we parted—you were sent up for ten years, while I escaped detection, though I didn't go back on you, as you should remember—I met and courted a woman in whom I found virtue was not a name, but part and parcel of herself; and the force of example has wrought a greater change in me than all the sermons that were ever preached. Still, unknown to her, and tempted by the love of gain, I occasionally followed my old courses, till I had amassed a sum sufficient to purchase this old road-house, then I quit for good the business which, more than once, brought me under the shadow of a felon's cell. That's the whole story, and I am bound to say life has gone easier with me ever since."

"That's a very fine story, Peter, but it isn't me that would fall to a woman's wiles in that same way, do ye mind. However, I'm not going to quarrel wid ye about it. Ye have the right to suit yourself, and as ye always did the right thing by me, I won't cross ye now. But one thing I ask ye—shelter for the night for mesilf and that cub of mine behind me. We made it."

"What cub?"

"Sure that young pal I brought along wid me, and it's an eyesore he is to me, bad luck to the young ruffian."

Macraisy turned around to indicate Jimmy, but Jimmy, as the reader knows, was not there.

"Where in thunder has the villain gone? He was seated at that table a moment ago."

"He must have walked outside while we were talking."

"Maybe he did, but I didn't see him do it. Well, ye'll kape us for the night and give us a good supper and breakfast, wid a dollar or two in the morning to see us on our way, eh?"

"I'll do that, of course, for old times' sake, Dan," said Gummidge reluctantly.

"Whist now, ye must drop the Dan. I'm Mr. O'Connor, an Irish gentleman, traveling under the doctor's orders afoot for me health. I've sunk me rale name bekase (I'll trust ye wid me sacret) I've escaped from the State prison, and the officers are beating up the country after me. I came down this way to throw dust in their eyes, seeing as they have an idea I'm bound the other way."

"Then you haven't served all your time?"

"No. I had two years more on me hands, and

as it wasn't to me taste I took advantage of the first chance to give the place the slip."

"If you should be caught here I am likely to get in trouble for harboring you."

"Not at all, for how should ye know who I am? Anyway, it's a small risk for ye to take for old times' sake."

"Let it go. You shall have a room and your meals for yourself and your companion, on one condition."

"What is that?"

"That we treat each other as strangers lest my wife——"

"Be it so, Peter. It's safe for me. Ye can introduce me to your wife as Mr. O'Connor, a gentleman you knew before you met her, and thin she will have no reason to suspect that I ain't as respectable as yersilf."

"Very well. Make yourself at home. I will have dinner served shortly in your room."

"Why in me room?"

"Because I shall have company in the dining-room in an hour or so."

"Company, is it? Ain't I good enough to mate your company?"

"It's a private party. A lawyer is to meet and dine with a lad from the private school in this neighborhood. The boy has finished his education and has reached his eighteenth year, when he is to receive the lasey left him by his father."

"Legacy, is it?" said the Irishman, pricking up his ears. "And he gets here to-night, does he? Sure he's a fortunate b'y, so he is. It would do me a power of good to make his acquaintance."

"No, no, Dan. You mustn't interfere with him. He's a fine boy, and nothing must happen to him."

"Sure, why should anything happen to him? What name does he sail under?"

"Mark Milton. His father was a prospector out West, and when he died left him the title deed to a mine, which, I understand, is valuable."

"Thin his legacy isn't in the shape of money?"

"I believe there is some money coming to him, but his inheritance is really the mine."

"And the lawyer is to settle wid him to-night?"

"That's the arrangement. He comes from the school and the lawyer from the village. They meet here, dine, and after the business is over he will return to school, pack his trunk and leave to-morrow for the West."

"Pass out the bottle, Peter, and we'll drink to his health. A b'y wid a fine legacy in prospect is an object to be toasted."

Gummidge placed two glasses on the bar and handed out a whisky bottle.

"Here's hoping the schoolboy's inheritance will lade him to fortune," said Macraisy, with a shifty glint in his eyes.

As he raised the glass to his lips a loud howl burst upon their ears.

CHAPTER III.—Mark Milton and His Trustee.

The back door of the public room opened with a bang, and Jimmy Twister shot in, followed by a good-looking, athletic young fellow, with Sally at his heels.

"Wow!" cried Jimmy as he started to pick himself up.

In this operation he was assisted by the boy behind, who grabbed him by the collar and yanked him on his legs.

"Oh, I say, go heasy, will you?" protested Jimmy. "I hain't no punchin' bag."

"You're a sneak thief, that's what you are, and I'll see that you land in the lock-up," said the boy, who was Mark Milton, the schoolboy hero of our story.

"Powder me blue, if I hever eard the like. I never boned nothin' in me 'ull life, so 'elp me bob."

"What a liar you are!" cried Sally. "Didn't I catch you in the missus' room looking through the drawers of her dresser?"

"Vell, vot of it? Me and me pal—Mr. O'Connor I meant to say—is goin' to stop 'ere to-night, and I vos just pickin' hout a room to suit 'im, for 'e's that partic'lar 'e must 'ave vot suits im or 'e gets a-valkin' in 'is sleep, vich is bad for 'im, as 'es hunder the doctor's horders."

"Hello, what's the trouble?" said Macraisy, stepping forward.

Mark explained that Sally had caught Jimmy in Mrs. Gummidge's chambers rifling the draws of her dresser.

"I found this coral necklace in his pocket," added Mark. "He's a thief."

"It must 'ave fallen into me pocket by haxident," said Jimmy.

"The idea! Just as if it could," sniffed Sally.

"There must be some mistake," said Macraisy. "The young man is my traveling companion, and it's meself that'll vouch for him."

"There, do you 'ear that?" grinned Jimmy. "Vhy, I'm that respectable butter wouldn't melt in me mouth. That's vot me grandmother used to say, and she vos a verry religious old lady who always vent to meetin' on Sundays."

"If this chap is your traveling companion, sir, I'd keep a sharp eye on him, or he and some of your property may be missing some day," said Mark. "If I was Mr. Gummidge, I'd hand him over to the village constable."

"Faith, young man, it's mighty free ye are wid your advice. Perhaps ye'll let me know whom I have the honor of addressing?" said Macraisy.

"My name, sir, is Milton, Mark Milton."

"Indade! Thin ye are the young gent who—"

"Hush!" cried Gummidge, in a hoarse whisper. "Are you mad?"

"Sir!" said Mark, in some astonishment.

"I was about to say that ye are the young gent who is bringing this charge against me poor relative. Under the circumstances, it's me juty to confess that me companion is not quite right in his head. Ever since he was sunstruck he has been subject to doing odd things. I regret that he intruded where he had no right to go, and I apologize for that same. Sit down at that table, ye bone of contention, and if ye move out of your sate before I say the word, I'll not be responsible for what happens to you," said Macraisy, pushing Jimmy into a chair.

Mark looked at the Irishman rather doubtfully. To say the truth, he did not take much stock in his statement. He was satisfied that Jimmy Twitcher was a sneak thief, and he thought Mr. Gummidge ought to take some action in the matter. As the landlord showed no disposition to do so, he didn't feel called on to proceed further. It

wasn't his house, and Jimmy hadn't stolen anything from him. The uproar had brought Bob Reynolds to the front door, so Mark joined him on the porch, while Sally returned to the kitchen to inform Mrs. Gummidge what had taken place. After a brief interchange of words, in which Gummidge implored Macraisy to be cautious and to keep his pal within bounds, the landlord went back to arrange for the temporary accommodation of his 'unwelcome visitors.

The Irishman read the riot act to Jimmy, and the boy promised to behave. Darkness was falling by this time, and Bob entered the public room and lighted the lamps. Sally was in the dining-room setting the table there for the dinner which Lawyer Peabody had invited Mark Milton to. She felt quite down in the mouth because the schoolboy was going to leave that neighborhood for the wild and woolly West where his mine was. Mark had been very kind to her ever since he grew friendly with Bob, and came over frequently to the road-house to see him. She was well treated by Mrs. Gummidge, who was a good Christian woman, but for all that she had to work very hard, for which she only received her board and clothes, and a small sum for spending money, and so she was impressed with the idea that she was being imposed upon because she was an orphan and a distant relative. She and Bob were always scraping and making up again, but never an unkind word came from Mark, nor an insinuation that she wasn't as good as he was himself.

"He's just as good as gold," she often told herself. "How I do love him! I wish he was my brother."

About the time Lawyer Peabody arrived, Bob showed Macraisy and Jimmy to their room in a wing of the house, and immediately afterward brought up their supper on a tray and laid it out on a table.

"Vot a plummy supper!" ejaculated Jimmy, his eyes bulging when they rested on a plate of ham and eggs, another of friend sliced potatoes, a loaf of bread partially cut in slices, a plate of butter, two cups of coffee, and two large slices of pie. "Blow me tight, if this 'ere hain't a layhout for a hemperor. Vill I 'elp meself, Dan? I'm that 'ungry that me tongue is 'angin' hout."

"I'll help you. Pass your plate. There are four eggs, faith, wid their yellow bellies turned to the sky. Seeing as I'm twice as big as you, three will be about right for me, wid two-thirds of the ham," said Macraisy.

"Oh, mother, do you vant me to faint? Vot's von egg to a growing boy like me? Vhy, I wouldn't know I vos heatin' it."

"Well, thin, to kape your mouth shut, ye shall have two, wid a fair half of the ham, and I'll order more."

"Dat's right, Dan. Horder it all hover ag'in. If I vas alone I could heat the 'ull layhout and tink nothink of it."

Macraisy helped Jimmy, and they proceeded to eat like the brace of hungry folks they were. The Irishman considered the repast sufficient, and though Jimmy eyed the empty ham and eggs plate longingly, he had to content himself with the rest of the bread and butter, and the pie. Soon after they had finished, Bob came up for the tray and dishes.

"Well, you chaps didn't leave much," he said, viewing the empty appearance of things.

"Would you if you vos as 'ungry as two hourang-houtangs?" replied Jimmy.

"You must have walked some ways to-day."

"Vell, you can take your oath ve did. Vhy——"

"Choke off," interposed Macraisy. "Have you got such a thing as a newspaper in the house, may I ask?"

"We have the Sparbolt News, published yesterday, and the Boston Post, which comes every morning," said Bob.

"Bring the Boston paper. Sure it's the latest intelligence I am always looking for."

"I will fetch it presently," said Bob, gathering up the dishes.

In ten minutes he brought the newspaper and handed it to Macraisy.

"Is there hanythink in it about us?" ventured Jimmy after Bob had gone.

"Are ye anxious to know, bedad?" grinned the crook.

"I always feels better ven I 'ave the hidea that the bobbies aren't troublin' their 'eads habout me."

"Don't worry, me boy. It's of small importance ye are to the police. Ye might get six months or so if they got hold of you. A mere bagateel, faith. But wid me it's different. I've broken jail, and the laste I can expict is me full sintence widout me rebate; and I belave there's another indictment out agin me on which I can be tried, wid the prospicet of five or six years more."

"Oh, mother! If I 'ad dat 'angin' hover me 'ead I'd ship for furrin parts as quick as a vink, so 'elp me bob."

"Shut up now and let me read the news."

Jimmy pulled a small black pipe out of his pocket, filled the bowl with the stray bits of tobacco he found in his vest pocket, and began to smoke with his feet on the table. At the end of fifteen minutes Macraisy threw the paper on the table and said he was going down to take the air.

"Don't ye move out of here while I'm away or it'll be worse for ye, that's me advice to ye."

"Me move! Vhy, I'm dat tired I couldn't lift vun foot over t'other."

"I'll be back in ten minutes, and I hope to find ye aslape."

Macraisy walked out of the room, but not to take the air. He was bound for the entry outside of the dining-room to see what he could find out about the young schoolboy and his mining inheritance. If there was a batch of money connected with it, and the lawyer passed it over to him that night, Mr. Macraisy knew what his plan of action would be. In any event, he hoped to make something out of the young heir if he had to follow him all the way out West, which was a promising country for gentlemen of the Macraisy stamp. Mark Milton and Lawyer Peabody had finished their dinner, and all the dishes had been removed from the table, when the rascally Irishman ensconced himself outside of the entry door, and alternately applied his ear and his eye to the keyhole, which commanded an excellent, though limited, view of the interior of the room.

One of Macraisy's ears was constantly on the alert against possible interruption and discovery

from the direction of the kitchen on the one hand and the public room on the other.

He was poisted on his tiptoes so that he could assume a perpendicular attitude in the fraction of a moment, and he depended on his ready wit, which seldom failed him in an emergency, to account for his presence in the entry in the event that he was surprised there. He was in no great danger, however, for when Bob Reynolds removed the last of the dishes, the lawyer requested him to see that he and his young friend were not disturbed, as they had business of importance to transact.

As Lawyer Peabody had previously given similar directions to Mr. Gummidge, that individual was not likely to intrude on them, particularly as he had no business in the kitchen, while he had quite a bit of business to attend to in the public room. Bob and Sally were eating their supper in the kitchen and talking about Mark Milton, while Mrs. Gummidge had gone to her room by way of the back stairs.

"My young friend," said Lawyer Peabody to Mark, "you are eighteen years old to-day."

"Yes, sir," replied the lad, with a smile.

"I congratulate you on your birthday, and I wish you a long and prosperous life, toward which everything seems to point, for you are blessed with a good constitution, have acquired a very fair education, and are on the point of taking hold of an inheritance which promises a fortune."

"Thank you, sir."

"This inheritance, as you have already been informed, consists of a mining property, located in Blank County, in the State of Colorado. It is on the outskirts of a mining camp called Poker Flat, a rough hamlet in a pocket of the mountain range. The camp did not exist at the time your father went prospecting through the district, but it came into being as soon as the news spread to the county seat, twenty odd miles away, that he had discovered gold and silver in the pocket. Fortunately, he staked out all the ground permitted one man by law before the rush began, and the gold seekers who came after him took up claims all around his own. Having registered his claims, he proceeded to do the preliminary work of excavation required by the mining law, and then he secured his title deed to the property, which was duly recorded in the county clerk's office at Silver Plume. I have here a certified copy of the deed. Although your father died without making a will, you being heir at law, the property naturally passed to you, though not directly, owing to the fact of you being a minor. The court appointed me trustee to act for you until you became of age. Although you will not attain your majority for three years yet, and during that interval the title will not actually devolve upon you, the time has come when, prompted by expert opinion, I have deemed it advisable for your interests to place you in nominal possession of the property. You are now through your schooling, and must take a serious view of life. I have decided that since it is out of the question for me to go West and take charge of your interests, the next best thing is for you to go there yourself and start the ball rolling. The mines all about your property are doing well, and there is no reason why the Milton Mine should not also become a pro-

ducer under proper management. I have received several offers to dispose of the property, any one of which, with the authority of the court, I have the right to accept; but I have turned them all down as not being for your best interests. I may say that a number of attempts have been made to jump your claims by unscrupulous persons who produced forged deeds and alleged bills of sale. Several rascals were in possession a number of months, long enough to sink a shaft, and bore a couple of short tunnels, before I was advised of the state of affairs. I took measures to oust them, but I have lately received word that they are hovering around the Flat with the view of taking advantage of the deserted state of things to renew their efforts. It is, therefore, vitally necessary that some one should be on the scene to protect the property, and since I cannot go, you must," said the lawyer.

"I am ready to go there, sir," said Mark. "I have already told you that."

"Yes, and the matter is settled in my mind. You shall have authority from me, as your trustee, to work the mine, and once you get things in operation, I do not believe you will be molested by outside influences. Here is the paper I have drawn up empowering you to act as your judgment dictates," and Mr. Peabody laid another document on top of the copy of the deed.

"Thank you, sir."

"All this business I should have transacted with you at my office, but for the fact that I have been called upon to defend an important action which comes to trial at Rockland to-morrow, and is likely to keep me away from Sparbolt for a week. Sooner than delay your departure I decided to have you meet me here and have the matter over with. You will need money for your expenses, and a sum to enable you to start operations at Poker Flat. Here is \$100 to pay your way out West and meet any small emergency expenditures, and here is a draft on the Silver Plume National Bank for \$900. You will kindly sign that receipt acknowledging having received from me the sum of \$1,000, as I shall need it as a voucher in the final settlement of my trusteeship."

Mark took the bills and the draft, and signed the paper.

"I think that is all now, and I wish you every success in your business operations. Write me as often as you can, for as your trustee it is necessary I should be kept fully informed as to how matters are going on about the property."

"I will, sir."

"Very good. I will walk with you as far as your school, and then wish you God-speed on your journey. You are on the point of entering upon a new life—a life wholly different from what you have been accustomed to; and you are about to assume grave responsibilities, on which your future largely depends; but I am not afraid of the result. You are a bright, courageous and enterprising boy—a true type of a young American. You will not fail to meet my expectations—I feel that in my bones—and so I send you forth into this new world to fight your own way, confident that you will meet the issue as your father met it and—win."

They rose and clasped hands across the table, while outside the door the spying Irishman, satisfied there was nothing more to learn, glided away

from the spot, his brain filled with a rascally design he intended to put in immediate operation.

CHAPTER IV.—The Crime on the Road.

Macraisy returned to his room and was pleased to find that his companion, overcome with fatigue, had fallen asleep as he sat at the table. He went to the window and looked out. During the last hour the sky had gradually clouded up, and there were indications in the air of an approaching thunder storm. The storm was coming in from the Atlantic, the waters of which were beating against the base of the long line of cliffs in that neighborhood. The road-house was about half a mile from the edge of the cliffs, and on a level with them. From the roof, on a sunny day, one could catch a view of the broad, sparkling sea, and on a bright moonlight night the same was possible. On this occasion Macraisy could make out nothing but a dark void, frequently lighted up for a moment by red streaks of lightning, while to his ears came the muttered growl of thunder, gradually growing louder and more ominous.

"'Tis a fine night, faith, for an enterprise that calls for a little nerve and expedition," he muttered, with a glance over his shoulder at the sleeping Jimmy. "For once that young imp is safe from interfering wid me plans. I want no witness to me actions to-night. A hundred dollars and a bank draft I may be able to turn to advantage is too good to let get by me. And thin the mine. It will be a cold day, Dan Macraisy, whin ye can't make something of your opportunities. The West is the place to hide meself in. I'm not safe East wid the officers on me track. If I could only shake me companion all would be plain sailing. It's a fool ye were to take the likes of him in tow. That's what I get for having a soft heart for a pal in the dumps."

He crossed over to the table and turned the lamp low.

"Perhaps I'd better remove it to that bureau. The fool might get the nightmare over that swell feed he's had and kick it over, and thin the house would go up and leave Peter on his uppers once more."

He changed the position of the lamp, then gliding to the door, opened it and listened. The only sounds came in a subdued way from the public room, where a party of farmers were drinking and having a good time after the labors of the day. He shut the door, and would have locked it if he could. Then he went to the window and opened it cautiously. A gust of cool wind blew in and flowed around Jimmy Twitcher's head. He moved in his chair and muttered in his sleep. Macraisy shut the window, grabbed a towel and threw it over the back of the sneak thief's head. Then turning to the window, he opened it again and cautiously got out.

A brilliant flash of lightning threw his figure into momentary relief, then it died out. When the next flash came the window was shut and the Irishman was standing on the roof of the kitchen addition below. At the same moment Mark Milton and Lawyer Peabody were standing at the door of the public room talking to Mr. Gummidge.

They were debating whether they could reach their several destinations before the storm swept over the landscape. Mark had persuaded the legal gentleman not to go out of his way to see him to the school, which was but half a mile or so away, while the lawyer lived on the suburbs of the village about a mile in the opposite direction.

They bade the landlord good-night and stepped into the road.

"I'll be over in the morning to bid you all good-by," said Mark to Gummidge.

"We'll look for you," replied the landlord, taking a look at the dark sky and going back to the bar, where his services were in demand.

Mark and Lawyer Peabody were swallowed up in the darkness, but a minute later an electric flash showed them parting in the middle of the road. A crash of thunder followed, awaking the echoes of the firmament, and showing how rapidly the storm was coming that way. The lawyer went on toward the village as fast as he could, while Mark hurried in the opposite direction. From the gloom of the road-house yard shot a tall, athletic figure. It was Macraisy on the trail of his victim. He was just in time to see the boy and the lawyer going in different directions. He was not near enough to distinguish one from the other, but having the idea that the school was near the village, he hurried after Lawyer Peabody, believing he was the lad he aimed to do up. Having longer legs than the little legal gentleman, he rapidly overtook him. The lightning flashes showed the lawyer at intervals ahead, but did not disclose his real identity to the crook. Macraisy saw that by crossing a corner of a field he would come out ahead of his supposed victim, and he adopted that plan. He came out on the road where a great oak tree threw its shadow in the sunshine halfway across the road. A flash of lightning showed him the lawyer hustling along on that side of the road, and only a short distance away. He drew a slung-shot and crouched beside the tree trunk. As the advancing shadow came up and was passing the tree, Macraisy sprang upon him like a tiger. A blow, and Lawyer Peabody sank senseless to the ground with a groan.

"'Tis done. Now for the money and the draft, and the deed of the mine as well," he cried. "Sure this will be a fine night's job for me, and no one will ever be the wiser, faith."

As he bent over the little man a brilliant flash illuminated the road and the surrounding landscape, and a terrible crash shattered the sky above. Then Macraisy saw the lawyer's features, and he started back aghast.

"Thunder and turf! I've killed the wrong party," he gasped.

The light went out and he stared at the motionless shadow at his feet.

"Bad luck on me stupidity!" he gritted. "It's ill luck that's on me to-night whin I thought me fortune was made. What shall I do now? The b'y has escaped, and it's too late to catch him now. The school must be in the opposite direction, and sure I thought it was close to the village ahead. Bad cess to me brains! They never deceived me before. Well, I can't stay here crying over spilled milk. Let me see what the feller

has in his clothes. A few dollars is better than nothing."

While he went through his victim's pockets the lightning flashed and the thunder rolled louder than ever. Macraisy transferred the lawyer's wallet, watch and cuff-buttons to his pockets with the celerity of one accustomed to the business, then springing up he abandoned the senseless man and started back hurriedly for the road-house. The first rain-drops were falling when he gilded into the yard of the road-house hostelry and made for the kitchen extension. Springing upon the rim of a big water butt, he gained the roof, threw up the window of his room and re-entered the house. A flash of lightning and a crash of thunder accompanied him. The latter aroused the sleeping Jimmy, and the young thief started up.

"Vhy, Dan, vere have you been?" he asked, seeing the hat on his companion's head, and noticing the man's crumpled appearance.

"Been, ye thafe of the night!" roared Macraisy, seizing him by the throat and forcing him back in the chair. "Nowhere, but looking out of the windy at the storm. Don't ye dare whisper that I've been anywhere. What would I be doing out on such a night wid a comfortable room at me disposal?"

"Oh, mother! Don't scragg me! I never seen you look that way before, Dan. I 'ope you ain't took a fit. Let go me neck or you'll 'ave all the wind hout of me, and vill 'ave to hanswer for me death."

That brought Macraisy to his senses, and he let go of his companion.

"Don't mind me," he said, flinging his hat on the floor. "It's dazed I was by the thunder and lightning, and I grabbed ye widout knowing what I was doing."

"Vell, don't do it ag'in. I never felt so like I 'ad a 'alter 'round me neck before. I shall never feel heasy after this ven I read of a 'angin'. It vill give me a crick in me neck."

"Shut up and come to bed. It's time we turned in for the night."

Five minutes later both were under the sheets, while the storm was howling like mad around the road-house, the wind shaking the window-panes which faced seaward and the rain pouring down in a perfect flood. A quarter of a mile down the road the pitiless storm was beating down on the white, upturned face of Lawyer Peabody, who had fallen a victim to a scoundrel's error. And there he lay for an hour, when he was found by a party of farmhands on their way back from the village after the storm had spent its rapid course and gone on its way inland. They bore him to the road-house, where his unexpected return in such a condition was viewed by the landlord with astonishment. He was brought to his senses and found not to be badly hurt. He declared he had been assaulted by a big man in the dark, who had sprung upon him unexpectedly from behind the big oak. Who the man was he could not say, for the night was too dark for him to identify him. That he had been robbed was easily proven by his missing watch, cuff-buttons and wallet. It happened, however, that in his clenched hand had been found a slight clue—a bit of necktie torn from the rascal who did him up. This was shown to Gummidge by one of the farmhands, who told

him to turn it over to the constable in the morning, as it might lead to the detection of the footpad who was guilty of the deed. The landlord examined it curiously, and then his face paled.

"Dan wears a tie like that," he breathed, a deadly fear gripping his heart at the thought of the consequences that might weave themselves about himself if his old pal was apprehended for the crime. "Can it be that he is the guilty party?"

Lawyer Peabody was put to bed after his wound was bound up, and Gummidge hastened to close his house. He remained in the bar-room for nearly an hour, a prey to acute reflections, then taking the lamp in his hand, he went upstairs. Pausing at the door of his guests' room, he softly turned the handle and slipped inside. He flashed the light around until it rested on the bed. Macraisy and Jimmy were fast asleep, and had apparently been so for some time. Putting down the lamp, the landlord fumbled over Macraisy's garments till he fished out the tie. One end of it had been torn off, and the piece Gummidge held in his fingers fitted in the break to a nicety.

"The scoundrel!" breathed the landlord. "He is the man. I must save him for my own sake."

He put the tie in his pocket, intending to destroy it. Then he went through the Irishman's pockets and found all the stolen property. Shaking his fist at his old pal, he turned and left the room as noiselessly as he entered it.

CHAPTER V.—The Arrest.

Morning broke warm and bright over the neighborhood, and the sunshine resting on Macraisy's face awoke him. He sat up.

"Where am I, at all at all?" he ejaculated. "Ah! I remember now. At Peter Gummidge's road-house, wid a warm breakfast in prospect, please the pigs!"

Macraisy sprang out of bed and seized his trousers. He dressed himself in a hurry.

"Where the dickens is me tie? Sure I can't find it at all at all. Niver mind for the prisint. The pocketbook first."

But to the Irishman's amazement the results of his crime had vanished completely.

"By the hoof of Balaam's rabbit, where have they gone to? Did I drop thim along the road? Sure there isn't any hole in me pockets. Holy murder! did I have all me trouble for nothing? And where the mischief is the tie?"

Macraisy was satisfied he couldn't have lost that, too. He sat on the bed and stared in perplexity at the wall. Finally he picked up Jimmy's tie and put it on, for he couldn't show himself without one. Macraisy decided that something was wrong, and it behooved him and his companion to get on their way before the investigation was begun over the lawyer.

"Get up, ye limb of Satan," he cried, shaking Jimmy into wakefulness.

"Vot's the matter, Dan? Has the 'cuse took fire?" asked the boy.

"You'll take fire if you don't get into your clothes in a jiffy."

Jimmy knew better than to dally when Dan spoke that way, and he tumbled out.

"Vere's me tie?" he said, looking around for it. "Vhy, if you hain't got it on yourself, Dan. Vot did you do vith your hown?"

"It blew out of the windy last night. Ye can hunt for it after breakfast."

The word breakfast had a pleasing sound to Jimmy, and he let the tie go. Such a small item as that never worried him. They went down to the public room and found Gummidge alone behind the bar.

"If ye'll serve breakfast to us, Peter, we'll be on our way."

"You shall have it right away," said the landlord, not looking at him.

"It was a fine bit of a storm we had last night, Peter," went on Macraisy. "Jimmy and me had just turned in whin it began, and sure it rocked us to slape as nice as ye please."

"I'm glad to hear it."

"Why?"

"Because a crime was committed in the neighborhood during the storm."

"A crime, is it? What happened, faith?"

"Lawyer Peabody, who dined here last evening with Mark Milton, was assaulted on his way home along the road and robbed of his wallet, watch and cuff-buttons."

"Is that a fact, Peter?" said Macraisy coolly. "Ye astonish me."

"I'm glad you had no hand in it."

"Me, is it? Sure ye wouldn't suspect me of sich a thing, Peter. The man is not dead, is he?"

"No, fortunately. The blow he received was a glancing one, and so he escaped injury. He could give no information concerning the man who struck him down, so the chap is safe if he is not discovered by accident."

Gummidge had delayed notifying the village constable about the outrage on Lawyer Peabody in order to give Macraisy and his companion a chance to beat it out of the neighborhood. Even at that he was afraid the pair would be overhauled. He comforted himself with the reflection that he had relieved his old pal of all incriminating evidence, so that in case he was arrested on suspicion nothing could be proved against him. In the course of twenty minutes breakfast was provided for the Irishman and his cockney companion, and they were called to it by Bob Reynolds. They ate in the dining-room, and at the conclusion of the meal adjourned to the public room to take leave of Gummidge. They found him waiting on two strangers, and stood around till he was disengaged.

"Well, Peter, it's going we are now, and if ye'll stand treat we'll drink to your continued health and prosperity," said Macraisy.

The landlord passed out the bottle and three glasses. After they had had a couple of drinks, the Irishman said:

"And now a last favor, Peter—will ye oblige wid a tin-spot to see us on our way, for it's broke entirely we are."

Gummidge dug down into his jeans, fished up a bill, and handed it to Macraisy. It was ten-dollar one, and the landlord had found it in the wallet belonging to Lawyer Peabody. Early that morning he had hidden the watch, the cuff-buttons and the wallet in a pasteboard box and buried it under the corner of his barn. He could not resist the temptation of removing the bill from the

wallet, for he reasoned that one bill being like another, identification of that particular note was impossible.

At that moment the head constable of the village, accompanied by a deputy, walked into the public room. He had received word of the outrage on Lawyer Peabody through one of the farm hands who had been sent early that morning to the village. As the lawyer was one of the most important and best respected citizens of Sparbolt, the constable lost no time in proceeding to the road-house to investigate the affair. The unexpected coming to the two constables rattled Gummidge a bit, for he easily guessed the reason for their appearance.

"Dan," he whispered, "the constables. Skip!"

The Irishman looked startled for a moment, but quickly recovered himself.

"Come, Jimmy, it's time we were after getting a gait on," he said, starting for the door.

The head constable regarded the pair with some suspicion.

"I shall have to trouble you to remain," he said brusquely.

"And who are ye who presumes to interfere with the freedom of an American gentleman like mesilf?"

"I'm the head constable of this district," and the officer threw back his coat and displayed his silver-plated star.

"The head constable, are ye? And what has that got to do wid us?"

"Nothing, perhaps, but as a crime was committed in this neighborhood last night, it is my duty to examine all strangers."

At that point Gummidge chipped in.

"I guess these people are all right, Mr. Smith," he said to the head constable. "They applied here last evening about dark for supper and a bed, and went to bed directly after their supper. When the storm came on I went up to their rooms to see if their window, which faced in the direction the storm was coming, was closed. It was, and they were both asleep in bed."

"At what hour was the crime committed?" asked the constable.

"About nine o'clock, soon after Mr. Peabody and Mark Milton left this place. The storm was coming up fast then. The lawyer and his young friend calculated that they had just about time to reach their destinations before it would burst upon the landscape."

"What's your name?" the officer asked Macraisy.

"Terrence O'Connor."

"What business brings you in this neighborhood?"

"Sure it's traveling on foot I am for me health."

"Indeed!" said the constable suspiciously.

"Me occupation having confined me too closely to me office for years, the doctor ordered me to travel from Boston to Rockport and back ag'in, by aisy stages, on foot."

"You live in Boston, then?"

"Faith, I do."

"And your business is—"

"Money linding."

"Where is your office in the city?"

"No. 16 Chinbone Lane, up two flights, off Sum-

mer strate," replied the Irishman glibly, giving a fictitious address.

The constable made a note of all his answers in his memorandum book.

"And this young man who is with you—who is he?"

"Me clark and office b'y. I took him wid me for company."

"His name is—"

"Jimmy Brown."

"He is an American, eh?"

"No, he's an Englishman."

At that moment, by an odd coincident. Lawyer Peabody entered through the rear door, and Mark Milton walked in at the front door. Both stopped and surveyed the scene before them.

"So you're from England, young man," said the constable, looking hard at the sneak thief. "What part, may I ask?"

"HI'm from Lunnon. I vos raised by me grandmother, a werry religious old voman, who took me to meetin' hev'ry Sunday, and told me never to prig vot didn't belong to me, so 'elp me bob," said Jimmy quite glibly, in spite of a warning glare from Macraisy.

"I see," replied Constable Smith coolly. "You're a cockney."

"Vell and vot of it? I couldn't 'elp bein' born vithin 'earin' of the Bow Bells, could I?" said the young thief flippantly.

"That will do," said the officer, taking a printed bill from his pocket. "You people may have nothing to do with the highway outrage last night, but nevertheless I arrest you both in the name of the law."

"What's that?" roared Macraisy. "Arrist us! What is the maning of this?"

"The meaning is that I regard it as my duty to take you both into custody on suspicion of being the parties called for in this bill which was forwarded to me yesterday by the Boston police. You, as one Dan Macraisy, an Irishman and professional crook, who escaped from the Massachusetts State prison a week ago, and has been seen in company with a young cockney sneak thief known to the authorities as Jimmy Twitcher, wanted for various small thefts in the Charlestown district. You both tally pretty well with the descriptions printed in this bill."

Smith made a sign to his deputy, who pulled out a pair of handcuffs and slipped one of them on the Irishman's wrist. The touch of the steel darbies galvanized Macraisy into wild fury. He tore the other end of the fetters out of the deputy's hand, swung it in the air, and struck the man down as flat as a pancake.

"By the piper that played before Moses, I'll not be taken alive!" he roared.

He sprang at Constable Smith like a tiger and flung him aside. Then he dashed for the door. Before he could make his escape, Mark Milton, alive to the situation, grabbed him around the body and tripped him up. They fell to the floor in a desperate struggle amid a scene of great confusion.

Jimmy Twitcher made good his escape in the confusion. Macraisy fought like a lion and in the melee the marked bill fell out of the villain's pocket. Macraisy managed to pull loose from his captors and escaped out the door and up the road. He was out of sight in a jiffy. Mark picked up

the mended bill and looked at it. Lawyer Peabody recognized it as his property and said so.

Gummidge nearly had a fit, for fear that he would be brought into the affair. The hunt for the thieves, however, had proved a failure so far.

Mark had departed for Boston and things had settled down at the roadhouse, when one morning Bob Reynolds was missing. He had departed, bag and baggage, during the night.

Sally was greatly depressed when this was found out. Another boy was hired in Bob's place at the roadhouse.

A few days later a letter came from Bob to Sally informing her that Mark had gone out to Poker Flat in Colorado, and that he (Bob) was following him.

Sally was tickled to death to think Bob had thought enough of her to write.

Mark Milton got his first view of Poker Flat from the top of a stage coach. A half-hour later the stage drew up before the hotel. Of course as Mark descended from the stage every one present saw he was a tenderfoot. Mark registered at the counter, and it was only a few minutes later that everybody around knew that the heir of the Milton mine had come to look after his property. He naturally became an object of much curiosity.

As dinner was announced and Mark was about to enter the dining-room the proprietor, Moses Taggart, introduced him to a man by the name of Jim Wagner, whom Taggart stated was Mark's father's friend. Mark was seated at the table beside Wagner and they were soon engaged in conversation, during which Wagner assured Mark that he could rely upon him to give him all the necessary points in regards to the business he was about to enter.

Mark thanked him and the meal was proceeded with.

CHAPTER VI.—Mark Visits the Palace.

By that time everybody in the room, even to the waitress and the cook in the kitchen, knew the identity of the stalwart, good-looking boy, whose father was the argonaut of Poker Flat, and who was heir to the largest claim in the camp, and one which was suspected to be the best. Naturally, he was regarded as a person of no little consequence. All the girls looked his way, and rather envied the one whose place it was to wait on him. They swapped opinions about him in the kitchen, and as the girls could size up a stranger as well as anybody, they agreed that he possessed the grit and determination indispensable to one in that wild and woolly district.

"He looks awfully new, Sall," said one, "but take it from me, he's got the stuff. Wait till he gets into a soft shirt and shakes his stiff collar and patent leathers and gets a coat of tan on; you won't know him as the same boy."

"He's mighty good-looking," said Sally. "They say he's come here straight from school. I s'pose he's one of those college boys I've heard about."

"Do you think Luke Brandon will do anything to him?" said another girl. "He's been howling for a tenderfoot ever since he and his friends went over to Coyote Bend and shot up the camp."

"Brandon isn't to be trusted, but as Jim Wag-

ner has taken the boy in tow, I guess it wouldn't be safe for Luke to get too gay. Wagner is the boss of this ranch, and everybody knows it. I've seen him draw his gun so quick on a man it made me dizzy. He didn't shoot, for the fellow caved, but if he had there would have been a funeral."

"They say Luke is as quick as greased lightning with his gun."

"Maybe so, but he hasn't shot anybody yet."

"It's a wonder, for he's as bad as they come out here."

"I've heard he's sweet on Ruby Ray, Mitchell's new importation at his concert hall."

"I'm not surprised, for half the men in the camp are sweet on her. She has got the loveliest face I ever saw on a girl of her years—she's only a child. And she's got the voice of an angel. I wonder where Mitchell picked her up?"

"Search me? The Palace is crowded every night now when she comes on."

"Mitchell made a ten-strike in getting her all right. They say he and his wife keep a sharp eye on her. She's not allowed to go around alone. Her fame got over to Silver Plume, which is not surprising, and Casey, who runs the Varieties there, was over the other day to see if he could engage her, but heavens! Mitchell wouldn't hear to such a thing. No man is going to let a gold mine get away from him, not that you could notice it."

So the waitresses talked while getting the food for the guests, and they were pretty well posted about matters and things in the camp. The meal over, Wagner took Mark up to his room.

"Have a cigar, Milton?" he said, but the boy declined the weed. "Your father was the first man to open up these diggings," he went on. "We used to pal together, that's why I consider it my duty to stand by you. He came over here alone prospecting and struck luck. After he had staked out all the law allowed him to, he returned to Silver Plume to get his papers out. Then it was he put me on, and I came back with him and picked out the claim I am working. Word was passed to sundry other chaps we knew, and they responded in a hurry. Then the news got around and there was a rush from different places to get in on what promised to be a good thing. The pocket was filled up until all the good spots had been pre-empted, and what was left over not proving to be worth much, the camp settled down to business with the population it had acquired."

"How came it to be called Poker Flat?" asked Mark.

"Well, the boys ran a poker game nightly down here on the level, and when some one dubbed the camp Poker Flat, the name stuck," answered Wagner. "Your father was getting things in shape to sink a shaft when he was took down with the mountain fever. I proposed carting him over to Silver Plume to see a doctor, but he wouldn't have it. He said a doctor had killed his wife, and he didn't want to put himself in the hands of one. I noted down his symptoms and, sneaking over to Silver Plume, saw a doctor, and put the case up to him. He didn't want to prescribe without seeing his patient, but he finally gave me a paper which I had filled at a drugstore and brought back with me. Your father rallied for a while, and might have pulled through if he had kept away from his claim. He wouldn't, and

a relapse set in, which carried him off in two days, and we buried him on the southern slope overlooking his claim. I'll take you there to-morrow."

"Poor father!" said Mark. "He died just when he struck luck."

The conversation then turned on what Mark proposed to do. The boy said he had come to take possession of his property and work it under the legal authority of Lawyer Peabody, his guardian. He showed the papers to Wagner.

"Very good," said the mine owner. "You have brought money enough, I suppose, to begin things?"

"I have a special deposit in the First National Bank at Silver Plume for \$900."

"That is hardly enough to more than start the ball rolling. However, that need not worry you. You can go slow, and devote your attention to opening up the mine by degrees. The main thing is for you, the heir and practical owner of the mine, to be on the ground to protect your interests by your presence. When you run short of funds I will advance you enough to keep you busy."

"Thank you, Mr. Wagner."

"Don't mention it. I have an idea you may be able to get along without having to ask for a loan. If you hit a pay streak right off, you will be in a position to take out ore enough to meet your running expenses and something over. It will depend on luck as much as anything else. At any rate, I will see you through. Now we will go out and see the camp by night, unless you are tired and prefer to turn in."

"I'll go with you."

"There isn't much to see outside of the Silver Palace. That's where all hands go during the evening. It's a combined saloon, gambling joint and music hall. They have a show there from eight till twelve—a variety entertainment, the feature of which at present is a very pretty little girl billed as Ruby Ray. She is an unusual fine singer for her age, which I should judge is fifteen. She has caught on like wildfire, and is making money if she gets all the coin and nuggets thrown at her during her two turns."

"I should like to see her."

"She makes her first appearance at nine, so we have lots of time. The place doesn't begin to fill up till then."

They walked downstairs, where Mark was introduced to several more of the denizens of Poker Flat. He received many invitations to drink, but as he didn't indulge in alcoholic stimulants, he asked to be excused. He and Wagner strolled up and down the "street," and finally landed before the brilliantly illuminated Palace. As there was no gas or electricity in the camp, the illumination consisted of a row of lamps with vari-colored shades over the entrance, and a number of gasoline torches, the flame and smoke from which waved about in the night wind. Inside, lamps supplied a very bright light, for there were lots of them, and keeping these in order furnished the hotel loungers with a couple of hours' work each morning. It wanted a quarter of nine when Mark and Wagner entered the big outer room, given over to a long bar.

The place was full of smoke and roughly dressed men. To the right was a longer room, the

far end equipped with a small stage. There were fully one hundred chairs, and the floor was laid with narrow, smooth boards, for dancing was indulged in every Saturday night after the show was over. The hotel waitresses always attended, and to ensure their coming, Mitchell, the proprietor, maintained the strictest order. Intoxicated men were barred from the floor, and a complaint from any of the girls against a man resulted in the chap being thrown out without ceremony. These iron-clad rules were posted up on the walls in big print, and Mitchell was always on hand to enforce them with the aid of his assistants. No charge was made at the Palace for admission. Admission was as free as the wind. The profit came from the bar, and the drinks and cigars served around to the audience. The music was good, and was supplied by a pianist, a violinist and a cornet player.

The "talent" who gave the show was only fair; that is why the coming of a real artist like Ruby Ray created a furore. The appearance of Mark with a stiff white shirt, vest, striking necktie, derby hat and patent leathers created something of a sensation among those who until then had been ignorant of the arrival of a tenderfoot at the Flat. A buzz of comment went up in the bar-room, and he probably would have been held up before he got as far as the concert room but for the fact that Jim Wagner was with him. In spite of Mark's manly air and good looks his city appearance operated against him. Poker Flat objected to dudes, and under that heading the boy was classed. The orchestra was discoursing a quickstep to which the audience was keeping time, when Mark walked up the center aisle to a front seat. Wagner was detained for a few moments by a friend, who wanted to see him about some business matter. Seated by the aisle was Luke Brandon and a crony. The moment he caught sight of the newcomer he nearly had a fit.

"Holy smoke!" he roared, springing on his feet. "A tenderfoot, by the livin' jingo!"

Mark passed on, but Brandon followed him.

"Up on thar stage and give us a quickstep!" he roared, grabbing the boy by the arm. "Up thar, and be quick erbout it, or I'll blow yer full of holes!"

Mark turned and looked straight into the glistering barrel of a cocked six-shooter.

CHAPTER VII.—"Won't You Be My Teddy Bear?"

"Did you speak to me?" Mark said quietly. "Who do yer s'pose I spoke to, tenderfoot? Up with you on the stage and shake a leg. Up with you!" and Luke pushed the boy forward a foot.

Quick as a wink Mark seized the hand by the wrist, pushed the revolver up and smashed the ruffian on the point of the jaw with all his might. The weapon exploded with a whip-like report as Luke fell over against a man behind him, and the bullet bored its flight through the curtain. The rascal was momentarily dazed by the blow, and Mark took advantage of the fact to wrest the revolver from his fingers. When Brandon sprang up, livid with rage, and with blood in his eyes, he found the situation reversed. He was looking into

the muzzle of his own gun. He foamed at the mouth, but dared not make a move.

Through the mob in the aisle pushed Wagner, with two bouncers at his heels.

"What's the meaning of this?" cried the owner of the "Blue Streak."

"Brandon tried to shoot up the tenderfoot, but it didn't work," said one of the spectators.

Wagner seized the ruffian in a grasp of steel.

"You scoundrel! Do you want to hang?" he cried.

The bouncers came up.

"Throw him out!" said Wagner.

There was a scuffle, but Brandon was dragged down the aisle. On the way they encountered Mitchell, who had been attracted by the shot. The proprietor did not ask for an explanation. He knew Luke, and was satisfied he was at the bottom of the trouble.

"Take him into the yard and tie him up there. Stand guard over him till I see what damage he's done. Did he shoot any one?" asked Mitchell.

"No. He tried to, I guess," replied one of the bouncers.

"Take him away."

Brandon was hustled into the yard and tied up. He was subsequently removed to the lock-up, a small building where offenders were sometimes left to cool themselves all night. There he was left till the next morning, when Wagner visited him and ordered him to leave the camp at once.

"Three cheers for the boy!" cried a miner.

They were given with a will, and then things subsided and the show went on. The curtain rose and Ruby Ray came on amid a burst of applause. Mark was greatly impressed by her girlish beauty, and he couldn't take his eyes off of her. Ruby swept the audience with a smile, and then her brilliant eyes rested on the young stranger, whose city looks naturally attracted her attention. Then came the introductory notes of her first song from the piano and violin. It was a brand new song she had got that morning called "Will You Be My Teddy Bear?" and she recognized its possibilities with her audience. The chorus she could sing directly at different people, and the embarrassment she was likely to bring to those parties did not greatly worry her. All her plans, however, went to the winds when she encountered Mark's earnest eyes resting on her face. Something like an electric shock passed through her.

She mechanically commenced her song, and its swing caught on at once, but when she came to the chorus, she extended her arms toward Mark and sang: "Come and play with me—be my teddy bear. I promise not to hurt you—I just want to tease you, hug you tight and squeeze you. Won't you be my teddy? Oh, I love you so! Won't you be my teddy bear?" Everybody at the front could see that she was singing to the young tenderfoot. As this was something new, it excited the risibilities of the crowd. The miners looked at Mark to see what effect it would have on him.

Ruby sang the second verse and directed the chorus again at Mark, instead of at some other person in front, which showed she was making a set at him. The audience repeated it as before, and the girl bowed herself off, only to reappear right away and sing another song. She sang three songs, then the curtain fell, and the waiters rushed in for orders. Half the audience, however,

got up and went outside, and during the time several other performers were on the stage there were few additions to the crowd. As eleven o'clock drew near, when Ruby did her second turn, which was a dance, the hall began filling up again, and when she came out it was crowded once more. After her final exit the house fell to very slim proportions.

Mark and Wagner left with the majority and returned to the hotel, when the boy went to his room, turned in and was presently in the land of dreams, whither he was accompanied by the pretty singer, who once more sang "Won't You Be My Teddy Bear?" to him. Next morning Mark visited his property with Jim Wagner and one of the latter's men. There wasn't much to see—merely a twenty-foot shaft and two short tunnels leading off from it, an open shed with a light hoisting rig, and a closed shed with a few tools, bags, and such things in it. The hoisting apparatus consisted of a rope attached to a windlass and run over an iron pulley in the roof of the shed, the other end being connected with a large iron bucket. This arrangement had been put in by the bunch of men who tried to work the property to their own profit, without having any legal right to do so. They sunk the shaft from ten feet to twenty, and opened up the tunnels. That was as far as they got when Wagner put a spoke in their wheel. The owner of the "Blue Streak" took Mark around the boundaries of his claim so the boy would get an idea of the extent of his property, and then introduced him to his own mine, where work was going on in a very industrious way. Ore and dirt were coming up the shaft, the hoisting being done by a winch. Wagner said he was going to bring a small steam-engine from Silver Plume shortly to do the hoisting.

CHAPTER VIII.—Fresh Arrivals at Poker Flat.

The arrival of Mark Milton at Poker Flat to take possession of his property was speedily known to the bunch of men who were working a doubtful claim up on the southern slope of the range. The fact created some excitement among them and drew forth many imprecations from their lips. Whatever plans they had in sight, the coming of the boy put a spoke in them. The leader of the crowd was a man named Riley. He had been the head and front of the scheme to jump the Milton mine, and his plans would have gone through but for Jim Wagner. Naturally, he hated Wagner, and would have tried to get back at him but for Jim's bold personality and influence in the camp. A meeting was held in the living apartments of the Riley faction. The purpose of the gathering was to consider what was to be done in view of the arrival of the Milton heir on the ground.

"I don't see what we kin do," said a man named Daley. "The boy is under the protection of Jim Wagner, and if we make any move against him there is sure to be trouble for us."

"Yes. We'll have to go now. If we make a mistake it will be all up."

"It ought to be easy to put the quietus on a young tenderfoot. He's as green as grass to the conditions that exist out here."

"Easy!" put in another, who had been at the music hall on the night before and noted Mark's conduct when up against Luke Brandon. "Not so easy as you think, my bullies. That boy has grit. You ought to have seen him last night when Brandon shoved his gun in his face and tried to make him get on the stage and dance. He pulled out of a tight a hole with flying colors as ever tenderfoot found himself in. If you chaps think he's a marker, you never made a greater mistake in your lives."

Riley uttered an imprecation.

"I heard about it," he said; "but I guessed the matter was exaggerated."

"Brandon has been forced to leave the camp, and warned not to return."

"That was Wagner's work, I s'pose?" gritted Riley.

"Of course. What Wagner says goes here, as you ought to know."

"Yes, I know it, blame him! I'd give \$100 to any one who would put Wagner on his back."

"Where did Brandon go?" Riley asked, after a pause.

"He took the stage this morning for Silver Plume."

"I think I'll go there and have a talk with him."

"I don't believe it will do you any good. Luke is not anxious to run the chance of swinging. There's more bluff than sand about him."

"That's the reason the boy got him, eh?"

"It helped some. He never intended shooting Milton, and the boy probably saw that in his eye. Had he shot the lad there would have been a hanging bee in the camp inside of thirty minutes, and he'd have been shot full of holes as he swung."

The outcome of the meeting was unsatisfactory to Riley, and it finally broke up without any plan being arrived at. A few days later work was begun on the Milton claim with the deepening of the shaft. Two men were employed to do the digging, while Mark attended to the hoisting. There was no rock at that point to interfere with the rapid progress of the work. The walls were shored up with rough boards as the digging proceeded, and ten days after Mark made his appearance in the camp the shaft measured a depth of forty feet. The work was inspected daily by Wagner, and that practical individual finally told Mark that he had gone low enough for the present, and he indicated the spot where the tunnel was to be bored. Work on it progressed easily for a dozen feet, and then rock was encountered. This necessitated the employment of a hand drill, and matters went slower. The rock soon showed signs of ore, and the indications were that a strike would soon be made in that direction. The trend of the ore signs was upward, corresponding with the surface indications on which Mark's father had based his conclusions that the pocket was rich in the precious metals. The Riley crowd had proceeded differently, Riley having been misled by signs that amounted to nothing and were leading him away from the ore ledge. That's why the rascal, in his impatience, started the second tunnel in a different direction which, had he been allowed to proceed, would ultimately have brought him results.

Mark had now been nearly three weeks in Pöker Flat, and it was noticed that he visited the Silver

Palace concert hall two or three times a week. The magnet that attracted him was little Ruby Ray. He occupied the same seat when he could get it, and the girl knew when he was there before she came on. This information she got through a peep-hole in the curtain. She invariably flashed him a smile on making her entrance, and frequently kissed her finger tips at him on doing so. All this could not fail of observation by the audience, and it soon became an open secret in the camp that the young people were sweet on each other, although so far they had not come together. As Mark had become a popular young personage in the community, and Ruby Ray was the idol of the Flat, the miners began to speculate on the outcome of what they called the silent courtship between the pair, and they became deeply interested in the affair. Such was the state of affairs when the yellow stage-coach arrived in front of the hotel one Saturday afternoon and dumped out a couple of fresh arrivals. One was a tall and well-built man with a Hibernian cast of countenance. He sported a heavy dark beard, a cowboy hat, and the rest of his garments were in keeping with the statement he made when he signed the register as "William Mulligan, Denver, Colo.," that he was a prospector and mining expert. His companion, who appeared to be in no way connected with him had a smooth and shifty countenance, and found some difficulty in placing his signature on the book. After he had done so, Mr. Taggart could not decipher it to save his life, and he was accustomed to studying some pretty weird signatures.

"What's your name?" he asked his new guest. "Vell, hain't I writ it down dere?" was the reply in a pronounced cockney accent. "Vere's yer hedication?"

"Never mind that. I can't read your writing. Hand it to me plain."

"My name's James Twitcher. I'm English."

Taggart marked the number of a room opposite each of the names.

"Fetch a trunk?" he asked.

"Vell, blow me! Vot ud I be doin' with a trunk?"

"I'll have to charge you transient rates unless you remain a full week."

"A week hain't nothink. I'll be 'ere till I leave. 'Ow long that'll be'll depends on vot 'appens. It might be a year for hall I know."

The visitor's statement was rather indefinite, but the conclusion Taggart drew was that he could count on the party staying a week, and as Twitcher had only a grip, he told him he'd have to produce \$10 in advance. Twitcher brought out a roll, peeled off two fives, and tossed them to the proprietor.

"There yer 'are," he said. "Now when do ve heat?"

"Dinner will not be served for over two hours yet."

"Oh, mother! And me 'arf starved."

"Didn't you dine at Silver Plume?"

"Vot of it? I'm 'ungry ag'in."

"I'll provide you with a bite presently."

"Vith a glass of hale, if yer 'ave it."

William Mulligan, whom the reader will recognize as Dan Macraisy, had in the meanwhile gone outside to look around. He made inquiries about the various claims that were being worked in the

pocket, and incidentally found out just where the Milton mine was situated. He learned that Mark had been in Poker Flat about three weeks, and had begun operations on his property. He went up in that direction and saw the boy working his windlass. He went over to him and said:

"How are ye making out wid your claim?"

Mark looked hard at him. He saw the man was a stranger there, but his voice had a familiar ring.

"I'm just getting started," answered the boy.

"You are a newcomer to the Flat?"

"Faith I am."

"How did you know this was my claim?"

"Sure I was told it was owned by a b'y, and it struck me ye was that party."

"Yes, I am the owner of this claim."

"It's a good one, they say."

"I hope so, but that remains to be proved."

"It came to ye from your father, I believe?"

"It did. He was the man who first found gold in this pocket."

"If he found gold, it must be in the ground. Do ye want any help on the property?"

"Not just now. Are you a miner?"

"I'm a prospector and mining expert. Me name is William Mulligan."

"Glad to know you, Mr. Mulligan. If you are looking for something to do, I would suggest that you go over to the "Blue Streak" mine yonder and see the owner, Jim Wagner. If he can't use you, he can put you in the way of a job."

"It's kind ye are, young man. I will go over there."

The bogus Mulligan then wished Mark good afternoon and took his way toward the "Blue Streak."

"Seems to me I've met that man before," thought the boy; "but where?"

He tried to think as he worked on, but could not place Mulligan. And yet he was sure he had met him somewhere.

ace," where such parties invariably stopped to drink, and were ready to make things interesting in case the invaders got too gay. Every man of them was a dead shot, and it would have gone hard with any bunch that showed an ugly streak. Mark and Jim Wagner reached the hotel, went into the wash-room, and were ready for supper when the Mongolian pounded on the gong. Then the boy saw that there was another stranger in camp. It took him about half a minute to identify this party as Jimmy Twitcher, and then, like a flash, he knew that Mulligan was the crook Macraisy. He wondered what had brought them to Poker Flat. Nothing good, he argued. He took the first chance to pass the news to Wagner.

"Crooks, are they?" said Wagner. "They will have to dust, then. We don't want such individuals here. You are sure you are making no mistake about them?"

Mark told him about what happened at the road-house on the outskirts of Sparbolt.

"I will have a watch put on them," said Wagner. "The man's name you say is Dan Macraisy?"

"Yes."

"And the other chap?"

"His name is Jimmy Twitcher. He is an English sneak thief. He can be identified by his cockney accent."

After supper Wagner asked Taggart about his new guests.

"One is William Mulligan, a prospector and mining expert. The other is an odd kind of fellow, whose writing is rotten. He told me his name was James Twitcher, but declined to say what business brought him here."

"The two are companions, I believe?"

"Not at all. They merely came over together on the stage."

"They appear to be strangers to each other, then?"

"They are."

Wagner said nothing more, and walked off.

"Blow me! if I hever struck sich a place in me life," Mark heard Twitcher say to one of the loungers outside. "I 'ad an hidea of hopenin' a 'otel, but blame me if I see a chance at all."

Mark guessed Twitcher would rather open a cash-box than anything else if he could do it without getting caught. Macraisy and Twitcher were both at the Palace that evening. Wagner, who was observing them, noticed that they did not come together or show any sign of palship. The Irishman did not attempt to make himself prominent in any way, but the reverse was the case with Twitcher. He hobnobbed with a dozen miners, and had a lot to say. Sunday was the one holiday of the week, and the miners put on their best clothes and went around enjoying themselves. The gaming tables at the Palace were open at full blast during the afternoon and evening, and, in fact, as late as the miners chose to stay. This was one of the biggest sources of revenue to Mitchell. He didn't run the games, but he got a rake-off on all the profits the gamblers made. He furnished the rooms, while gamblers supplied the outfits. Those gentlemen also paid him a good price for their board and lodging. Mitchell also boarded and lodged his vaudeville talent. His wife looked after this end of the business, and she knew how to do it.

Mark spent Sunday quietly, as did the mine

CHAPTER IX.—Macraisy Tries To Put It Over Jimmy.

The sun went down, and shortly afterward dusk came on. Work was knocked off at the mines, and the men began to gravitate toward the hotel and boarding places on the street. The majority of the miners hung out at the places where they got grub, and a cot in one big room, for \$7 a week. Mark waited for Wagner to come along, and they started off together. Poker Flat was ruled by a law and order committee of six men, headed by Wagner. They met once a week to discuss the affairs of the camp, but these meetings were generally brief, as there was little to engage their attention. Each member of the committee had the authority to act as the society of the whole if the occasion demanded action on his part. They were men well qualified for that duty, and the mere approach of one was sufficient of itself to stop an incipient row. Once in a while tough citizens from Yuba Dam, Paradise Fork and sundry other small mountain camps rode into the Flat late Saturday night, or after dark on Sunday, and shot things up; but as long as they did no damage they were not interfered with. On these occasions the whole committee made their way to the "Pal-

owners and the better grade of the Flat people. In the afternoon he usually walked out up the mountains in the direction opposite to the pocket. This was what he did after dinner on the day after the arrival of Macraisy and Jimmy Twitcher at the camp. After going a mile or two he sat down with his back to a rock and mopped his forehead with his handkerchief, for it was a warm day. Presently he heard voices approaching from behind. He easily recognized the tones as belonging to Dan Macraisy and Jimmy Twitcher, the sneak thief.

"I tell yer, Dan, this here scheme of yours is dangerous," said Jimmy.

"Arrah, what are ye talking about?" replied the big crook, impatiently. "Don't ye s'pose I know what I'm about?"

"If yer do I'm blow'd if I can make hour 'ow you're goin' to vork it. Yer told me to pick hup all the p'intos I could, v'ich I 'ave done, and there hain't no doubt but dat boy is pertected by the 'ead chap of this 'ere place, v'ich 'is name is Jim Vagner, an' if yer laid yer 'ands on the young feller yer'd catch it 'ot."

"Do ye take me for a baby, you meally-mouthed calf? D'ye s'pose I'm afraid of this Wagner? Tare and hounds! Sure I'm a match for any man who walks on two fate!" roared Macraisy, angrily.

"I hain't a-sayin' yer ain't, Dan; but Wagner is honly von of 'arf a dozen coves vot carry guns vithin heasy reach, and you vouldn't stand no show vith them. Better give up the hidea of tryin' to hocus dat boy and makin' him sign away a share of 'is property. Ven 'e got back his senses he'd swear dat yer vorked de game on 'im, and vot Wagner vouldn't 'ave to say to yer I 'ate to think about. Maybe 'e'd 'ave yer 'anged has an example, vich I hunderstand is a pop'lar vay of dealin' hout justice in this part of the country."

"Blame your advice, and ye, too, ye omadhaun! Sure it's a clog instead of a help ye are to me schames."

"'Ere's gratitood, blow me! If yer vishes to dissolve the partner I'm villin'. Say the vord and I'll tip me rags a-gallop in the mornin' ven the stage starts. This 'ere place hain't safe for heither of us. At hany rate it don't hoffer nothink in my line. Denver vould soot me better, dash my vig if it vouldn't. A chap vith my pecooliar talents vould stand a show of pickin' hup somethin' vorth 'vile."

"Sure it's an ungrateful scoundrel ye are to talk about leaving me in the lurch," said Macraisy. "Ain't I payin your board and tratin' ye to a swell time as a gentleman of leisure? After all me lessons have ye picked one pocket since ye landed here yisterday afternoon?"

"If I 'ave I hain't said nothink about it. If yer diskivered 'ere makin' free vith other cove's valuables it vould go vorser vith yer dan if a bobby got 'is 'ands on yer."

"So ye want to lave me, ye villain!" went on Macraisy, deliberately. "And the nixt thing ye'd do vould be to betray me."

"No, no, Dan, so 'elp me bob!" protested Jimmy.

"Ye think I don't know ye, me darling. Haven't I heard ye talk in your slape? Don't I know what's passin in that bullet head of yours ivery minute of the day? I'll tell you what it is—

you know of me breaking into the sheriff's house at Silver Plume, and putting a ball into the head of his nephew who tried to stop me. Ye didn't have the sand to join me in that affair, though maybe ye'd find the courage to peach on me if I gave ye the chance."

"Vy, Dan, blow me tight hif I'd hever go back on a pal for nothink."

"I don't intend to give ye a chance, ye villain! I intend to protect mesilf, do ye mind that?"

"Vot do yer mean, Dan?" asked Jimmy, uneasily.

"The sheriff and his posse may be this way before morning."

"Vell, vot of it? You ain't suspected, are yer? No vun knows who done the business."

"Ye know it, don't you?"

"I vouldn't say nothink. If I vos hasked I'd be as dumb as a mop-stick."

"Do ye know what I brought ye out here for—two miles from camp?"

"To talk about yer scheme to rob Mark Milton."

"Not at all, me darling."

"But you've been a-doin' it, 'aven't yer?"

"Ttat was only to throw sand in your eyes, faith."

"I don't understand yer, Dan. You talk hawfully queer—not like you've been hin the 'abit of doin'. Vot's come hover yer?"

"Ha, ha, ha! Is it afeard of me ye are gettin' all of a sudden?"

"Don't laugh dat way, Dan. It don't sound natural. If yer wants me to take a 'and in yer scheme I'll do it even at the risk of me neck."

"Of course ye will—now."

"I'm halvays at yer service, Dan."

"Do ye see that flat rock at your elbow?"

"Vell, I hain't blind. Of course I sees it."

"Do ye see this bit of paper?"

"Yes, Dan."

"Lay it down there. Now take this fountain-pen in your fingers and write what I tell ye."

"Go on, Dan."

"This is the sivinteenth of July, nineteen hundred and two. Put that down."

"It's down, Dan."

"It's a fine scholar ye are, faith. Now see that ye write what I've got to say plain enough for a gentleman to read, or I'll put a ball through that skull of yours that'll let a bit of daylight into it."

"Don't, Dan. P'int dat gun away from me, or I'll 'ave a fit."

"Write, now—I confess I entered the house of Sheriff Craig on the night of July 15th with the intintion of claning the place out."

"You hain't goin' to confess yer done dat, are yer, Dan?"

"Niver mind what I'm going to do. Perhaps it's repinting of me crime I am, and I wish to turn over a new leaf. Have ye got that down, ye villain?"

"Yes, Dan."

"Bein' discovered in the act, I further confess that I shot the young man through the head and then made me escape from the house."

Jimmy, after some difficulty, wrote that down, too.

"Vell, Dan?" he said. "Vot's the hobject of this 'ere paper?"

"Niver mind. Go on wid your writing. Put down—this is only one of me many crimes, for which I'm wanted by the police in the East, since I came to this country, and being overtaken wid remorse, and faling that open repentance is good for me soul, I put all this, which I swear is true, down on paper in me own handwriting——"

"I say, Dan, it's me dat's writin' dis," said Jimmy, stopping.

"Go on!" thundered Macraisy, clapping the revolver against his companion's head. "Do as I bid ye, or by the hoof of Balaam's——"

"Oh, mother!" gasped Jimmy. "I feels an 'alter as neatly 'round me neck as hif it was made to fit."

"Have ye got ivery word down?"

"Yes. Vot am I to do next?"

"Sign that paper!"

"Vot! Me sign it! Oh, Dan, yer wouldn't——"

"Sign it, I tell ye."

"I've lost the pen."

"You've dropped it beside the rock. Pick it up and sign instantly or ye are a dead thafe."

"Vot vill become of me?" blubbered Jimmy.

"Sign!"

"I can't vith dat pistol again me 'ead."

"There, thin, I'll hold it away from yer; but if ye don't put your fist down so it can be recognized—tare and hounds! what's this?"

The speaker rested his hand holding the revolver on the rock behind which Mark was listening to all that had transpired, and the last sentence was forced from him by the action of Milton. The boy seized his wrist with one hand and pulled the gun from his hand with the other, then he covered the rascally Irishman with his own weapon.

CHAPTER X.—Another New Arrival.

"Oh, mother! It's Mark Milton!" cried Jimmy. "What do ye mane by snatching me gun out of me hands, young man?" said the big crook in a blustering tone.

"To save you from committing another crime," replied Mark.

"Another crime, is it? What do ye mane?"

"You have just compelled your pal to write down a confession of the last crime you committed—the murder of Sheriff Craig's nephew. At the point of the revolver you were forcing him to sign his name to the paper. I knew from the tone of your voice and the glint in your eye you meant to shoot him the moment he had written his name, for in no other way could you prevent him from repudiating the forced confession, so I felt it my duty to save his life."

"Upon me word, it's a wrong conclusion ye have jumped to," said Macraisy.

"I doubt it. At any rate, I know you. You are masquerading here as William Mulligan, prospector and mining expert."

"Well, ain't that what I am, faith?"

"No, your name is Dan Macraisy, crook and self-confessed murderer."

The Irishman ripped out an imprecation. If a look could have killed Mark, the boy would have dropped dead.

"Sure it's a liar ye are if there ever was one," roared Macraisy.

"Twitcher," said Mark.

"Vell?" said the sneak thief.

"Hand that pen to your pal."

Jimmy did so.

"Now, Macraisy, oblige me by signing your own confession," said Mark.

"Me sign that paper? What de ye take me for?"

"Sign it, or I'll put a ball through your leg so you can't make your escape, and then I'll hand you over to the committee of safety. I shall hold your pal as a witness against you, and when Sheriff Craig gets hold of you I don't think he'll waste much time over you."

"And if I do sign it, do you think me life will be any safer?"

"Perhaps not, but it will be a decent act on your part, for I heard you say that open confession is good for the soul."

"If I sign it, will ye give me a chance for me life?"

"You don't deserve it."

"Sure it isn't yersilf, Mark Milton, mine owner and fortune's favorite, who would have the heart to put the rope over a fellow creature's neck."

"What chance do you want?"

"The chance to fly to the mountains and save me life if I can."

"You ask that of me after coming to the camp to rob me if you could?"

"Since the deed has missed fire ye can afford to be generous. If ye turn me over to the sheriff me blood will be on your head."

"Are you not guilty of the assault on my guardian, Lawyer Peabody, whom you struck down and robbed that night in the thunder storm on the outskirts of Sparbolt?"

"I admit I am, but it was a mistake, sure."

"A mistake!"

"Yes. It was ye I was after."

"Me!"

"I confess it. I listened that evening to all that passed bechune ye and your guardian in the dining-room of the inn, and I made up me mind to rob ye of the \$100 he gave ye, the draft for \$900, and the copy of the deed of your mine. In the darkness I followed the lawyer instead of ye, and so ye escaped."

"You admit all that to me?"

"I might as well, hoping ye will give me the benefit of me frankness."

"You are certainly a scoundrel, Macraisy."

"A man is as circumstances makes him. Since I've made me bed I must lie in it."

"I shall be lax in my duty if I give you a chance to get away, and yet I am disposed to do it, believing that the law will get you before long."

"Let me go and I'll take me chance wid the law."

"Very well. Put your name to that paper."

"I have your word I can go, thin?"

"You have."

Macraisy signed the paper with a flourish.

"Twitcher," said Mark, "put your name to the paper as a witness."

"Oh, mother! I'll be hanged for the murder, too."

"You were not a party to it, were you?"

"I should 'ope not. Blow me if me talents

hever got as 'igh as dat. I'm honly a hamachure at the business."

"Then you're safe so far as that crime is concerned. Sign the paper, and put the word 'witness' over your name."

"'Ow do yer spell the vord. 'As it got vun hess or two?"

"Two. Now hand me the paper."

"I can go now, I hope?" said Macraisy.

"You can," nodded Mark.

"And me revolver?"

"Remains with me."

"Are ye coming wid me?" said the crook to Jimmy.

"And give yer a chance to blow me bloomin' 'ead hoff? Not if I know it. No one can prove dat I ain't a 'ighly respectable young gent wot is travelin' for me 'ealth. Me grandmudder alwus said dat he who priggid vot isn't his'n, he is sure to go to prison, v'ich 'ighly moral hobobservation I've halvays followed, blow me if I 'aven't."

"Then bad luck follow ye for the snivelin' cur ye are!" roared Dan.

He turned about and made for a nearby gorge at a rapid rate.

"Follow me, Twitcher, and don't try to get away," said Mark.

"Oh, I say, yer hain't goin' to have me put in jail, are yer?" protested Jimmy.

"You are the witness to this paper, and as you are a slippery customer, you will have to be kept track of until you are no longer wanted."

Twitcher insisted that he had no intention of running away, but Mark did not intend taking any chances with him. He landed the sneak thief in Wagner's hands with a full explanation of what had happened, and Jimmy was locked up to await the coming of the sheriff. Sheriff Craig turned up that evening with a posse, in search for the murderer of his nephew. As he had no line on the scoundrel who committed the crime, he felt that his work was cut out for him. He was agreeably surprised by the intelligence which awaited him at Poker Flat. After interviewing Wagner and Mark Milton, who handed him Macraisy's confession, which he was obliged to admit the man had signed under compulsion, he had Jimmy Twitcher brought before him. He put the young thief through a sort of Third Degree, and elicited enough from him to show that the Irishman was guilty of the crime. Finding out the direction the big crook had taken, he started at once in pursuit, leaving Twitcher in confinement until his return.

We may as well say here that Macraisy was not caught. Whether he got clear off, or perished in the wilds for want of food, was never learned. He never was heard of again. Jimmy was taken to Silver Plume and locked up as a suspicious character, but at the end of thirty days he was released, and he at once "cut his stick" for Denver, where he was arrested for stealing, and was sent to prison for a year. A week later the stage deposited a dilapidated looking youth at the hotel in camp. He had begged a ride of the driver, assuring that personage that Mark Milton would make it good. As there were no passengers at all that afternoon, the driver agreed to give him a lift over the twenty miles, for he certainly looked as if he needed it. The reader

will doubtless recognize the boy as Bob Reynolds. He had had a rocky time beating his way out West, but he stuck to it like grim death, and his persistency won out.

As he entered the hotel he did not look like a satisfactory guest, and Taggart asked him where he came from, and what he wanted at the Flat.

"I came from Sparbolt, Maine, and I want to see Mark Milton," replied Bob.

"You claim acquaintance with young Milton, then?"

"He knows me well," nodded Bob. "I've come all the way here to work for him."

"You'll find him over at his mine," said Taggart.

"How will I find the mine?"

The hotel-keeper took him to the door.

"Do you see those two small sheds up the pocket about a mile away?"

"I guess I do."

"They're on the Milton claim. Go there and you will find the owner."

Bob started off with alacrity. In the course of twenty minutes he reached his destination. A man was sewing up the mouth of a bag of ore, and he was the only person about that Bob could see.

"Is this Mark Milton's mine?" he asked the man.

"It is," was the reply.

"Is Mark around?"

"He's down in the tunnel."

"How can I see him?"

"Wait till he comes up."

"When will he come up?"

"When he's ready to do so."

"Can't I go down?"

"I'll let you down after I pull up the next bucketful of ore."

That was satisfactory to Bob. Ten minutes later a bell tapped. The man went to the windlass, turned it, and up came, not a bucketful of ore, but Mark himself.

"Here's a chap who's waiting to see you," said the man.

Mark looked at the ragged Bob, and for the moment did not know him, for Bob was about the last person he expected to see out there in Poker Flat. Then he recognized him with not a little surprise.

"Put it there, Bob. I'm awfully glad to see you. What brought you out here?"

"I couldn't stay at the road-house after you left, so I packed my grip and followed you. I want to work for you if you'll let me."

"Why, you look a wreck. How did you come?"

"I rode on the freight when I wasn't thrown off, and walked the rest of the way. I've had a hard time getting here."

"You look it. Well, never mind, I'll take care of you, now that you're here, and you shall have steady work in the mine. I want another hand to turn the windlass, and you'll do as well as any one. How did you leave Mr. and Mrs. Gummidge and Sally?"

"I left the Gummidges in the lurch, and I guess Sally had a fit after I was gone, but I wrote to her and told her not to worry, and said I was

coming out here to join you, so I guess it's all right," said Bob.

"Are you hungry, Bob? You look famished to me."

"Oh, my, don't mention it. I'm half starved."

"I'll give you a note to the proprietor of the hotel. He'll give you something to tide you over till supper. Then take a chair out front and wait till I come," said Mark.

Bob took the note and made tracks back to the hotel.

CHAPTER XI.—Conclusion.

A week passed, and then Mark received a letter from Lawyer Peabody saying he was coming out to Poker Flat to see Mark and the mine. Mark was greatly pleased to learn of his guardian's proposed visit. He was particularly anxious to introduce him to Jim Wagner, who had been so kind to him. Soon after Bob's arrival Mark made the acquaintance of Ruby Ray, and in view of the young mine owner's standing in camp, Mitchell permitted them to see each other every night at the back of the stage. Something warmer than mere friendship rapidly ripened between them. Mark learned that she was an orphan and a distant relation of Mrs. Mitchell. That lady encouraged the young lovers, for she saw that it would be a fine thing for Ruby if she married the owner of such a promising property as the Milton claim.

During all this time Riley and his bunch up the mountainside had failed to do anything to get the better of Mark. The fact of the matter was they found it too dangerous, though Riley did not wholly abandon his intentions. At last an idea struck him. He went to Silver Plume and had his beard shaved off. Then he made some other changes in his face, returned to Poker Flat and asked Mark for a job in the mine. It happened that the boy wanted an experienced man, and Riley was that. He was put to work.

That afternoon Lawyer Peabody arrived at the camp and received a royal welcome from his ward. That evening he was introduced to Wagner, and he expressed his gratitude to the owner of the "Blue Streak" mine for the aid he had so generously given Mark. Next morning Mark took him out to his mine. Riley was down in the mine at the time, but he had an accomplice at the mouth of the shaft. Mark and the lawyer got into the tub to go down. Bob Reynolds was at the windlass, and the bucket slowly descended. The accomplice and Riley exchanged signals. The tub had almost reached the bottom of the shaft when the rope broke, throwing Mark and his companions out. Riley was standing in the shaft looking on, and uttered an oath as he observed the failure of his plan to do away with the young mine owner. Mark and the lawyer picked themselves up and brushed off their clothes. They were shook up a little, but not at all hurt. The boy and his guardian regarded the breaking of the rope as an accident.

There was one person, other than the two conspirators, who knew better. This was Bob. He had seen Riley's accomplice reach out a knife

and hack at the rope. He dared not leave the windless till the rope suddenly slackened, then he rushed upon the rascal and hit him a heavy blow on the head. The man staggered, lost his balance and pitched head foremost down the shaft. His falling body struck Riley on the head and shoulders and bore him to the ground, and there the two lay motionless. When they were picked up both were found to be dead, their necks broken. Bob had to go over to the "Blue Streak" mine to borrow a rope, and he told Jim Wagner what had happened. That man returned with him to the Milton mine and helped get the new rope over the pulley and attach it to the drum of the windlass. Bob then lowered him down the shaft with his foot in the noose. He found the two dead men laid out, and he recognized Riley as the head of the crowd which had jumped the mine a few months before. He told Mark what had happened above, and that the breaking of the rope was not an accident, but a dastardly attempt to kill both him and the lawyer. Of course, the boy was much surprised, while Lawyer Peabody was greatly disturbed.

"The rescals met their fate unexpectedly," said Wagner; "but no sympathy need be wasted on them, for they only got what they deserved."

The news of the tragedy and Mark and the lawyer's escape soon spread through the camp and created something of a sensation. The dead scoundrels were soon provided with rough box coffins and buried with little ceremony or loss of time. Before the end of the week the bunch who had been working unprofitably up on the side of the mountain packed up their things and departed during the night. No one was interested in their destination, but it afterwards was learned that they had taken up a claim in Yuba Dam, and were working it. Lawyer Peabody remained a week in the camp, and then started back East. The further the tunnel was pushed forward in the Milton mine the better the results became. Mark had been take ore out in increasing quantity for some time back, and now he had 100 bags ready to ship to the smelter at Silver Plume. He had been obliged to borrow some funds of Wagner, but that act did not worry him any, since the prospects of his mine grew brighter day by day. He had no team to transport his bags of ore. This difficulty was bridged over by Wagner, who loaned him the two he owned.

Success engenders enemies, and Mark's good fortune aroused jealousy on the part of two or three small claim owners whose property failed to pan out to their liking. In some way they learned that he was short of money—possibly they surmised the fact from the slow way the Milton mine was worked—and they argued that by causing him a serious loss they would put him in a bad hole. It also happened that the Riley adherents had trouble about this time with the ruling powers in Yuba Dam, and they were given twenty-four hours to make themselves scarce or take the consequences. They left and went over to Paradise Bend. This diggings were giving out as a pay streak and was becoming depopulated. Those who remained were the scum of the settlement, and ripe for any piece of rascality that promised to mend their fortunes.

Some one suggested that they could make a

good thing of it by capturing an ore wagon or two between Poker Flat and Silver Plume, and carrying the results to a private smelter down at Yellow Fork, the proprietor of which was a man who would ask no unpleasant questions if silence was made an object to him. One of the crowd was sent to Poker Flat. He found out that Mark Milton was going to ship two wagon loads in a few days, and that two other mine owners were going to add their wagons to the train. Preparations were at once begun to intercept the convoy, and a wild ravine in the hills about midway between the Flat and Silver Plume was selected as the point where it was to be surprised.

On one Saturday afternoon Mark had his hands load his bags of ore on the two wagons, in readiness to start for Silver Plume on Monday morning. Similar preparations were made by the other two small mine owners whose wagons were to make up the limited train. The two conspiring mine owners who felt a grouch against Mark were unaware of what was on the tapis as concerned the contemplated hold-up of the train at the ravine along the road. They were ready to put a dastardly project into execution of their own account. One of them had been to Denver, and when he came back he brought a small quantity of dynamite with him. He could have got all the dynamite he wanted in Silver Plume, but did not deem it advisable to purchase it there.

On Sunday night he and his partner in rascality went to the Milton mine with the intention of planting it where it would do the most good in the tunnel. The sight of the two loaded wagons suggested that if they were involved in the general destruction it would help the good work along. Under each wagon they placed a package of explosive, to which was attached a slow match. They intended to touch the matches off after finishing their nefarious work in the tunnel. One of them went down the shaft, while the other remained on the surface to pull him up. In some way the dynamite exploded in the hands of the man on his way down the shaft, and a sheet of flame shut up the shaft, while the ground trembled and the sound reached all the way to the camp, and brought an alarmed crowd on the run up the pocket. The man at the windlass who was lowering his accomplice was found unconscious, and the shaft of the Milton mine a complete wreck. The other rascal was, of course, blown to pieces.

The news flew like wild fire and brought Mark and his friends to the scene. Investigation disclosed the dynamite planted about the loaded wagons. They showed that an effort had been

made to demoralize the Milton mine. The unconscious man was brought to, subjected to a Third Degree, and confessed the whole plot. In the end he was compelled to make good the damage, and then he was ordered to sell out his mine and dust. When Mark and Wagner went down into the ruins of the shaft to make an investigation of the damage, they found that the dynamite had opened up an unsuspected silver lode of remarkable richness, and this discovery proved to be the best thing that could have happened to the boy. The ore train was delayed a day by the explosion, and that day sufficed to spoil the scheme of the men who had ambushed themselves in the ravine. They were seen and driven off by a sheriff's posse, and several of them were caught.

Their project came to light through the weakness of one of the prisoners, and the bunch which escaped were pursued for several days, and finally rounded up in the mountains. Half of them were killed and wounded in the fight that followed, and that ended the project to hold up ore enroute to Silver Plume. Two months later the Poker Flat smelter went into operation and after that no more ore was sent to the county seat. The discovery of the silver lode on the Milton property started a new era in the boy's affairs, and from that time pronounced success crowned a schoolboy's inheritance, and within six months the biggest producer in Poker Flat was admitted to be Mark Milton's mine.

Next week's issue will contain "THE YOUNG BANKER; or, THE MYSTERY OF A MONEY-BOX."

YAKIMA INDIANS MOURN LOSS OF HUCKLEBERRY CROP

Yakima Indians in the State of Washington are highly incensed because sheep grazing on Mount Adams huckleberry fields have destroyed their age old natural resource.

The red men who each year make trips to the wild berry fields of the mountainous regions have appealed to Governor Hart to protest the pasturing of livestock in certain parts of the national forest reserves where wild fruit abounds.

Klickitat and Yakima Indians from the earliest traditions of these tribes have annually depended upon the products of the berry fields for part of their winter supplies and the part of Mount Adams where huckleberries grow profusely they call Sweet Mecca, by the Indian name of Husum.

CURRENT NEWS

A PLAGUE OF GRASSHOPPERS

France has had a grasshopper pest of unparalleled severity. They have not only destroyed crops but, according to cable dispatches, they have interfered with train service as well. The insects appeared in such numbers that they blocked train service between Niort and Fontenay-Le-Comte, a distance of over thirty miles. So thickly were they massed in this region that it was necessary to stop trains frequently to clear the tracks. The train crews were supplied with special implements for this purpose.

29 SNOWBOUND AUTOISTS

After having been snowbound for five days, with nothing but potatoes and beans to keep them from starving, twenty-nine persons, including seven women and six children, were brought to Cheyenne, Wyo., from a ranch home eighteen miles north of the city.

The autoists, mostly residents of Southern Wyoming and Colorado, who left Wheatland for the South in twelve automobiles, were caught by a

blizzard. They managed to reach the nearest house, where they were marooned until a rescue party, using a ten-ton army tractor, succeeded in plowing through the snow and rescued them.

POISONING OF THAMES GULLS STIRS LONDON

Proof that the average Londoner is ardently fond of birds was furnished when the report of the death of several scores of Thames gulls was given prominent space in the newspapers and called forth general indignation.

An old custom is feeding the gulls along the Thames embankment, where hundreds of persons daily stand, throwing bread crumbs into the air and watching the birds catch the morsels on the wing.

The other day the bodies of a number of gulls were found floating in the river. An investigation disclosed that some person, instead of throwing bread crumbs to the birds, had fed them matches, the phosphorous ends of which poisoned and killed them.



LOOK! LOOK!



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Held Down By Poverty

— OR —

A POOR BOY'S STRUGGLE FOR SUCCESS

By GASTON GARNE

(A Serial Story.)

CHAPTER XII.

The Bookkeeper And The Porter Act In Such A Way As To Arouse Suspicion.

Knowing this, the boy fought like a tiger to beat them off until aid in some form should come, for he knew that in that part of the city people were passing to and fro within a hundred feet or so of him, and he was quite sure that the yell emitted by the man he had butted in the stomach must have been heard.

His body was aching from the blows he had sustained, and his face was cut and bleeding, but he was still hopeful of keeping on his feet until others came up to the spot, when one of the gangsters who had been knocked down, caught the brave lad by the ankle and with a strong tug brought him to the ground.

Then Harry gave himself up for lost.

Up to this instant Harry had saved every bit of his breath for the hard fight he knew he had to put up, but when he found himself going down to the sidewalk he drew in a deep breath and shouted at the top of his voice:

"Police! Help!"

Then he was down.

Nevertheless, he struggled and squirmed like an eel, trying to evade further injury.

The gangsters, most of whom had felt the weight of Harry's hard fists, had no doubt expected an easy victory with the boy when he passed through the dark and narrow street where they had lain in wait for him, and his spirited resistance, and the punches he had given them, had thoroughly angered them, and when he was down on the sidewalk they broke silence and expressed themselves vindictively.

"Now let him have it."

"Give him the boots!"

But it was not so easy done as said, for the plucky and powerful boy was twisting and squirming, and having now become accustomed to the faint light of the narrow street, was able to see what was going on and to evade the boots he saw coming down on him. So far he had been fortunate, but he knew it could not last, and it was with a great sense of relief that he heard the rapping of police clubs at either end of the street.

That settled the fight.

The gangsters had no desire to be arrested, and when they heard the tapping at both sides of the block they were instantly alarmed.

"Cut it," said a voice that Harry recognized as that of Monk Wardman, "and follow me. Keep close together, and smash through."

Without bestowing another glance at the boy on the ground, the rascals formed in a solid body be-

hind their leader, and rushed for one end of the narrow street. A policeman was coming down, as they could plainly see, for the officer was between them and the light at the end of the street, but they did not pause an instant in their rush.

The unfortunate officer was bowled over and left stunned in the roadway, and the gangsters dashed out of sight.

Battered and bruised from the many fists that had landed on him, but not seriously damaged, Harry Hale got on his feet as two policemen rushed up from the other end of the narrow street, followed by passing citizens who wanted to see what it was all about.

"What's up?" asked one of the policemen.

"I was tackled by the Swamp gang," replied Harry.

"Over yonder from the leather district?"

"Yes."

"For what reason? Do you know?"

"Oh, it's because I've interfered with them," said Harry. "They had me down and would have kicked me to pulp in another minute."

The officer who had been bowled over came up at this moment, rubbing his head and dusting off his uniform, and then Harry walked with them to the next street, where the officers stared at him as he stood under the full glare of an electric light.

"Well, you are a sight!" said one.

"Why, they've battered you to pieces," said another. "Your nose is bleeding, your face is all marked up, and you've got lumps on your forehead as big as hen's eggs."

"I guess you're right," said Harry, "but they've got something to show as well, you can be sure of it."

"And there couldn't have been less than eight or nine of them," said the officer who had been bowled over by the gang in their mad rush to escape arrest. "Well, kid, you certainly are a good one, and no mistake."

"Better come into the drugstore with me and get something done to you before you go home," kindly advised one of the policemen, and as Harry did not want to alarm his mother more than was unavoidable, he followed the policeman's advice.

The druggist was a clever man, and removed many traces of the battle, but for all that when Harry left the place he carried two large lumps on his forehead, and bore traces of scratches on his cheeks, while no less than six different places on his neck and face were covered with small patches of adhesive plaster. Still, the blood had been wiped and washed away, and Harry knew his appearance would not be alarming.

On the way home, although he no longer abandoned himself to the reflective attitude that had cost him so dearly, Harry could not help thinking over the recent attack.

Everything had seemed settled between him and the Swamp gang after he had so thoroughly thrashed Monk Wardman, and the members of the gang had met him again and again under conditions that would have given them a decided advantage, and had done nothing more than to glare at him.

And now, shortly after his affair with Marty in West street, he was attacked in force.

(To be continued.)

ITEMS OF GENERAL INTEREST

RECORD FOSSIL FOUND

Discovery of the thigh bones of a Patagonian dinosaur, each bone measuring 2 metres, 70 centimetres (nearly nine feet) in length, and claimed to be the largest unearthed in any part of the world, was announced by La Plata Museum, Buenos Ayres.

The skeleton of the great diplodocus assembled at the Carnegie Museum in Pittsburg has thigh bones only 1 metre, 50 centimetres long, although the entire skeleton measures 25 metres, and from these figures it is conjectured that when the Patagonian dinosaur roamed the Mesozoic forests he was at least 45 metres, or about 140 feet long.

THE CONQUEST OF KILIMANJARO

Kilimanjaro, Africa's two-headed giant, has again been climbed, this time by two Englishmen, Gillman and Nason. Mount Kibo, the higher of the two heads by some 2,000 feet, was selected for the adventure. The slopes covered by loose shingle, afforded but a slippery foothold; above this zone, progress could only be made by chopping steps in the ice. Persevering with superhuman efforts, the rim of the ice-filled crater was finally reached; here were found, in a good state of preservation, the cards of German climbers who had forestalled the Englishmen. At about 19,500 feet the pulse was 120 to 130, and breathing was 35 to the minute. Boiling-point observations were also made, and many photographs were taken.

REWARD FOR 3 DETECTIVES

Inspector John L. Coughlin, head of the Detective Division, New York, recently summoned Detective Sergeants Edward A. Kiley, John L. O'Brien and Frederick Stepat to his office and tendered each man a check for \$1,000 as a reward from the Post-office Department for their part in the capture of three robbers who, on Oct. 24, 1921, held up a mail truck in Leonard street, near Broadway, and escaped with more than \$2,000,000 in money, jewelry and securities. Each of the criminals was sentenced to twenty-five years in prison in the Federal Court several months ago.

Under the rules of the Police Department each detective was permitted to receive only \$750 of the reward, 15 per cent. of the \$3,000 going to the Police Relief Fund and the remaining 10 per cent. to the Pension Fund.

CHINESE POSTMAN CARRIES MAIL IN A TUB

China's mail service, dating back to the Chou dynasty (1122-249 B. C.) undoubtedly holds first place in the world of mail transportation for unusual methods. Traffic over certain streams in Annwei Province is accomplished by a round tub in which the postman stands with his sacks while another paddles. Last year an aerial route was

maintained for a time between the capital and Tsinaufu, in Shantung.

Away off in Chinese Turkestan four-wheel wagons drawn by ponies carry the mails, while in Shensi mule litters and bullock carts serve the purpose. In Manchuria horse-drawn sledges skim over the ice and on the Kalgan-Urga route slow-trudging camel trains constitute the mail transport. There are certain places on the Yangtse where the mail-man pulls himself by hand along a cable stretched from one side of a gorge to the other with the mail sacks strapped to his back. Across the Yellow River in Shensi a square raft made of water-buffalo skins carries the courier.

In modernized China fast steam trains and motortrucks have superseded the ancient methods. The annual report of the post-office for 1921 shows that from 1905 to 1920 the bulk of mailed matter has increased from 3,000,000 pieces to 400,000,000, and the area covered from 20,000 li to 475,000 li. During 1921 there were 442,116,358 pieces of mail matter handled, averaging slightly more than one piece to every inhabitant.

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A Strange Case

By COL. RALPH FENTON.

I was on a mission at Chillington, and my headquarters were at Melcham Court during the time. I was not sure of being a welcome guest, but for this I did not care, since it was the public I sought to serve and not a single individual.

Joab Melcham was reputed wealthy. He was master of Melcham Court, and lived in a style becoming the blue-blooded aristocracy from which he sprang. He was also president of Chillington Bank, and a stockholder in various other enterprises of importance. Among the common people he was not liked. He chilled and repulsed them with his frown, and people will not overlook such things.

At the time of which I am writing Andrew Mayne was cashier of the bank at Chillington, and he was in difficulty. It was a difficulty that promised to land the cashier in state prison for a term of years. It was his wife's tears and earnest protestations of her husband's innocence that induced me to look into the matter at all. Perhaps the reader will wonder why, since I am a detective, and at home in cases of crime in its every phase.

The reason was simply this: Andrew Mayne was in jail, charged with appropriating money not his own to the amount of forty thousand dollars, and he admitted his guilt with the coolest indifference, seemingly, as to his fate.

And yet his wife positively assured me that Andrew was innocent.

I of course received her assurance with a large degree of allowance.

"Your husband, madam, must be a queer man to confess guilt if he is really innocent. I have read of cases of this kind, but have always considered them myths. In my own experience I never met with such a case. I cannot see how Andrew Mayne can remain long outside of prison. If he is the man he admits himself to be, the state prison is the place for him!"

I fixed a cold glance on the wife's face while I talked. It was possible, I thought, that she knew her husband was guilty, but hoped in some way to save him from merited doom.

There was that in the pale face and pleading eyes, however, that assured me that whatever Andrew Mayne was, his wife was an honest, earnest woman and devoted wife, and really a believer in the innocence of her unfortunate husband.

"How do you explain your husband's confession?" said I at length. "I cannot reconcile it with a theory of innocence."

"I know, sir, how strange it seems; but Andrew never took the money. There's a conspiracy somewhere to ruin Andrew."

"And he lends himself to it—for his own destruction?" I remarked, with an incredulous look. "It does seem strange. You will attempt to ferret out the robber, sir?"

There were tears in the comely little woman's eyes as she put the question.

"I will see your husband, and if there is any chance for work, you may depend upon it I will not shrink from the task."

With this assurance I left the Mayne cottage and repaired to the city jail. I found Andrew Mayne in anything but a pleasant mood. His haggard face and sunken eyes did not serve to prepossess me in favor of his innocence. His whole demeanor was that of a man laboring under some great mental trouble.

"I am guilty. The sooner the farce is over the better."

This was his answer to my inquiries.

"Why did you take the money? You had a living salary, with none but a wife to support beside yourself."

"Don't ask me. I plead guilty; I can say no more."

With those words ringing in my ears I left the jail.

Surely there was no chance for a case here. I had best return home at once and let the law take its course. When I uttered these words mentally, the pale, tear-wet face of Mollie Mayne came suddenly to haunt me, and to shake my faith in things visible both to the eye and ear.

After pacing up and down for a time I concluded that I would look into the matter a little further, and if I could find the least excuse for remaining on the case, I would do so. Court would not convene for four weeks, and this would give me ample time to investigate.

My next move was to interview the president of the bank, Joab Melcham. Since Mr. Melcham was one of those most interested in the defalcation, and, as I was, as a detective, no respecter of persons, I did not make the visit in the shape of an officer of justice. I wished to make the acquaintance of the wealthy owner of Melcham Court without reserve. As a detective I would be received graciously as a matter of course.

I learned that Melcham Court was minus a butler, the man who had filled the position for many years having departed this life very suddenly but a few weeks before the opening of this narrative. It was for the vacant place I applied. I had recommendations without number. I was always careful to supply myself with such necessities when needed, and they come in good stead just now.

While the banker read my credentials, I mentally reviewed him.

He was rather a handsome man, with silky beard and bright blue eyes, and not far from forty. His every movement was quick and energetic, showing great nervous force.

I was made up for the occasion, with mutton-chops and the dress of one who had seen better days. In fact, I represented myself as a broken-down English gentleman, who had sought America for the opportunity of regaining a portion of my lost fortune, etc. I will not tire the reader with repeating my story here.

Joab Melcham cast a keen glance into my face, over my person, and then said:

"You will do."

That was sufficient, and I was installed as butler at Melcham Court.

It was an English house, and its master was English. I learned the weak side of the banker's nature—love for all things English—and at once ingratiated myself. Soon gentleman and butler were on an extremely friendly footing. Melcham had no family, save a family of servants. He

was a widower, and I did not wonder that I often found him indulging a fit of blues.

What was I to gain by all this?

One morning something occurred that set me to thinking deeply. I always delivered the banker's mail, morning and evening, usually to him in the library. On the morning in question, however, Melcham was late in rising, and I, having received several letters from the postman, went to the banker's chamber. The hour was late. The chamber door was lightly ajar, and as I had on cloth slippers, my feet made little noise. I came to a halt at the door, held for a moment by a strange sound from within—a deep groan, that seemed to come from the heart of one in terrible mental agony.

"Heavens! if this is true, and Andrew Mayne hears of I am ruined. He must never know it—never!"

In husky accents came the words to my ears, and I knew they fell from the lips of Joab Melcham.

I waited a moment at the door, when, hearing a servant in the hall approaching it, I at once pushed open the chamber door and advanced into the room.

"Ah, it is you, John? Mail? Oh, yes, I am glad you brought it. I will be down soon."

He took the letter from the salver and I noticed that his hand trembled as he did it. I was fully convinced that Joab Melcham was laboring under some terrible excitement. He possessed great powers of self-control, however, and rapidly became calm.

It was after twelve when the banker came down. Partaking of a hasty lunch, he left the house and walked briskly toward the bank. Nothing but a slight paleness indicated the recent excitement that had possessed him.

After he was gone I again visited his room. I found nothing of the *Morning Chronicle*, yet I knew the paper had been taken in his room that morning. Evidently the banker had taken the paper with him; in this there was nothing strange, however. It was an easy matter to secure another from a passing newsboy, and I was soon examining its contents with lynx eyes.

I could discover nothing that could in any possible way cause the banker such excitement. I was on the point of laying down the paper, when my eye caught a familiar name. It was under the head of "Obituary." "Charles J. Mayne, a highly-respected citizen, died very suddenly at his home in — street, Montreal. Heart disease is supposed to be the cause. Mr. Mayne was nearly seventy, and a citizen of worth. He has relatives in the States."

That very day I sought an interview with Mrs. Mayne, the prisoner's young wife. I showed her the obituary notice and questioned her regarding it.

"Charles J. Mayne was my husband's father," she said. "They have not met for years. I think Andrew will feel even worse than he does now when he learns the truth. Would it not be best to keep it from him for the present?"

"I will see."

When I showed the obituary notice to Andrew Mayne he came near falling under the blow.

"It has come at last," he said, in a voice husky with emotion. "Does Mr. Melcham know of this?"

"I am not able to state," was my evasive reply. "Would it affect him in any way if he did?"

"I wish to send a written word to the banker. Can I trust you to take it, Mr. Sharp?"

This was his answer to my question. He was deeply excited, and trembled not a little. I tried to get the fellow to confide in me what he wished to say to the banker, his late employer, but he persistently refused. At length I consented to be the bearer of a sealed letter to Joab Melcham. Paper and envelope were obtained of the jailer, and Andrew was permitted to write a note to the banker:

Joab Melcham came in late that night. I placed Andrew Mayne's letter in his hand and stood back respectfully while he perused it. I watched him narrowly, and saw that his face paled, and that he looked deeply annoyed.

"I am going to Boston," he said, addressing me. "I shall drive out a few miles to see a man, and take a train there. You will explain to all who may call."

Soon after Mr. Melcham vanished, and his carriage wheels rattled away.

I was determined on a bold move, and made it.

When Joab Melcham stepped upon the platform of the little way station, I was not far behind him. He did not buy a ticket—he was too cunning for that. In ten minutes the train would be due.

"Mr. Melcham?"

The fleeing banker turned and faced me quickly. He looked into the muzzle of a revolver.

"Not Canada, but a prison, my friend," I said coolly. At the same time I produced a pair of steel bracelets.

"The young fiend has peached!"

But he submitted, nevertheless. I knew then I had made no mistake. My man was near by with a light wagon, and Melcham went back to Chillington, instead of proceeding across the border.

On the following day Chillington was astonished at the intelligence that the banker, Melcham, was under arrest for embezzlement. The case was plain enough after that.

Andrew Mayne had made no statement, but I knew that he had warned the banker of what he might expect, and it was not the young cashier's fault that Melcham had not escaped.

On learning of the bank president's arrest, Mayne did make a statement, which was afterward proved in court.

The cashier had taken upon himself the crime of which he knew Melcham was guilty, in order to shield his old father, who, some years before, would have gone to prison for the misappropriation of a few thousands, had not Melcham, then a young man, fled from the place in order not to testify against one who had befriended him. When Andrew Mayne caught Melcham in the act of robbing the bank of which he was himself president, Melcham pleaded for mercy, and reminded him of the elder Mayne's case, which the banker said was not too old to be resurrected. To save his father, Andrew Mayne consented to shoulder his employer's villainy.

Andrew Mayne was set free. Melcham confessed his guilt and threw himself on the mercy of the court. He got ten years in the penitentiary, nevertheless.

FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY

NEW YORK, JANUARY 19, 1923

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ITEMS OF INTEREST

PAYS HER 4-CENT INCOME TAX ONE CENT EACH QUARTER

John T. Rafferty, collector of internal revenue for Brooklyn, told recently of a woman whose total tax for the year was 4 cents, and who paid 1 cent every three months. He added that the postage used in notifying her of the amounts due was far in excess of the tax.

THE KILLING OF LOBO, THE WOLF

For three long years Lobo fattened on the cattle of the Arizona plains; from one ranch alone, in one year, he seized 50 fine white-faced yearlings. A government hunter, in an automobile, has at last brought Lobo down with a single shot from a rifle with the rear sight missing. The wolf weighed 78 pounds after the skin from shoulders to head was removed, and was the largest ever seen on the range; his disposal means a saving of several thousand dollars in stock annually.

BOYS FIGHT POLICE AND FILL COAL SACKS

A band of boys, 12 and 14 years old, the other day, solved the problem in Yonkers, N. Y., of obtaining coal. Shortly after daylight the boys, carrying sacks, descended en masse on the coal yard of William S. Harrigan Company in River street, Yonkers. When the surprised watchman tried to run them away the boys chased him back into the building, attacking him with chunks of coal.

The watchman telephoned police, and when a cordon of patrolmen arrived the boys split into two groups. One group held off the police by throwing coal while the other members of the band continued to fill their sacks. When the filling was completed they gave a signal to their companions and all fled. None of the boys was caught.

FACTORY EMPLOYEES ATTEND OWN NIGHT SCHOOL

That the average man desires to better his condition and is willing to go to quite a bit of trouble

to do so is indicated by the success that has attended the inauguration of night school classes among the tire builders at a big factory in Akron, Ohio.

Several hundred men have enrolled in the classes. Many of these are men in mechanical departments, who are interested in such subjects as arithmetic, geometry, trigonometry, mechanics, physics, blue print reading, mechanical drawing and the like.

However, general classes covering such subjects as organization and management, business law, finance, and economics have also proved widely popular.

"Married men seem to stick better than single ones," says H. K. Carpenter, in charge. "Less than 10 per cent. of those who enrolled two months ago have dropped out, and all of these were single men. Ninety per cent. of the men taking the school work are married, and are men who are working to better themselves."

LAUGHS

"Ma has solved the servant girl problem." "That so? How?" "She's decided to do the work herself."

He (nervously)—Margaret, there's been something trembling on my lips for months and months. She—Yes, so I see; why don't you shave it off?

Commercial—If a man has an income of two millions a year, what is his principal? Cynic—A man with such an income usually has not principal.

"It is always well to humor women," says Noah Count, of Chiggerbite. "I let my wife think she knows more about running a furnace than I do, and as a result I haven't been in my own cellar in five years."

"How old is your little brother?" inquired Willie. "He's a year old," replied Tommy. "Huh! I've got a dog a year old, and he can walk twice as well as your brother." "That's nothing. Your dog's got twice as many legs."

First Tramps—Strange how few of our youthful dreams come true. Second Tramp—Oh, I don't know. I remember how I once yearned to wear long trousers. Now, I guess I wear them longer than almost anybody in the country.

"Son, why don't you play circus? It's great fun. First you make a sawdust ring." "Where'll I get any sawdust, dad?" "Here's the saw. Just saw some of that cordwood into stove lengths. You can have all the sawdust you make."

"My father and I know everything in the world," boasted a small boy to his boon companions. "All right," answered the latter. "Where's Asia?" Then the first speaker proved himself a true if budding diplomat. "That is one of the questions that my father knows."

GOOD READING

MINE 4½ TONS OF GOLD

Four and one-half tons of gold were obtained by the Soviet Government from its gold mines during the twelve months ended Oct. 31.

The Lena gold fields alone yielded more than three and a half tons, while the remainder was obtained from seven other gold fields. The number of workmen engaged in these fields, according to the Supreme Economic Council, is 11,789.

BABY TOSSED IN MAIL SACK

Amid the hustle and bustle of a large crowd of Christmas shoppers in the main post-office in Cleveland, Ohio, Dec. 22, came the cries of a mother for her lost infant.

While the mother was addressing Christmas packages at a table in the lobby she placed the child in a market basket, which she placed under the table. Her packages ready to be mailed, she looked for the baby. It had disappeared.

The basket, with its contents, had been picked up by a post-office employee and thrown into a mail sack. Cries from the child as the sack was about to be placed on a mail truck led to its discovery.

The woman refused to divulge her identity.

ANCIENT FOREST UNDER WASHINGTON, D. C.

Evidence of the existence of an ancient swamp in which great trees flourished in days long past, possibly contemporaneous with earliest man in America, has been discovered in a deep excavation made for the foundation of a hotel under construction in Washington, D. C., says *Science*. At a depth of about twenty-five feet below the street level the excavation disclosed a layer of black swamp muck, containing large quantities of wood, tree trunks and stumps. Some of the stumps are of great size, a few of them reaching a diameter of nine or ten feet. Much of the wood is well preserved, showing clearly the woody structure and the external markings of the bark. A preliminary examination indicates that one of the more common trees of this ancient swamp was cypress.

The story of these trees, however, is only a brief chapter of the whole geologic history shown in the excavation, which has just been examined by Chester K. Wentworth for the United States Geological Survey. Ages ago this part of the Atlantic Coastal Plain was from time to time covered by the sea, into which streams swept vast quantities of mud, sand and gravel and boulders which formed thick deposits that covered large areas. When the region finally emerged from the sea the Potomac River cut its valley in these deposits, which were carried about here and there also by smaller streams. The larger boulders are derived from the granite on which the gravel lies, but some of the smaller pebbles come from parts of the Potomac basin beyond the Blue Ridge, and others from veins of quartz in the granites of the Piedmont Plateau.

Over the layer of plant debris and muck in this old swamp fine clay and pebbles were laid down by streams of water during the glacial epoch,

when the northern part of North America, as far south as Northern Pennsylvania, was covered with immense sheets of thick ice, showing that the trees lived in the latter part of the Great Ice Age, which is variously estimated to have ended from 20,000 to 30,000 years ago.

WHAT CAUSED THE CHILEAN QUAKE?

How Chili's death-dealing earthquake, which shattered cities and engulfed their helpless inhabitants with tremendous tidal waves, originated at sea off the coast of that country, is explained by Dr. J. Humphreys' meteorological physicist of the United States Weather Bureau, from the seismographic records made by the earth's tremors at this point. His report is given out by Science Service. For four hours the pen of the highly sensitive instrument drew the picture of the movements in the earth, which wrought such havoc among the Chilean towns in a few minutes.

Earthquakes, Dr. Humphreys said, are produced by a slipping or breaking of the crust of the earth as a result of strains. These strains may be caused by the shrinking of the interior of the earth through temperature changes, changes in loads due to rapid erosion taking material from one place to another in the course of a few hundred years, or from the tendency of higher land to flow out to sea.

From what is known of the present quake, it seems to have been caused by higher land coming out to sea. The actual break in the crust occurred at some distance from shore, and this sudden change in the ocean floor at that point produced a tidal wave. As there were several such waves, there must have been several faults or breaks in the earth's crust at the sea bottom which created the different huge billows in the incompressible water. It is probable that this crack extended for a hundred miles or more and that the wave created was detected in the Philippines or other distant Pacific points.

Breaks, such as caused the shocks and waves in Chili, have left their mark on the physical geography of our own country. For instance, there is a break in the earth's crust which can be seen at Great Falls, Va., near Washington. It has been traced from near Boston, through New York to the James River in Virginia. The Hudson River Valley was created by a similar slipping in the earth's crust.

An earthquake may occur anywhere on the earth's surface and no place is immune, yet they are most likely to happen at the present time in the newly formed geological regions such as are found along the Western Coast of South America, our own Western Coast, up to Alaska and down the other side of the Pacific by way of Japan, the Philippines and Java.

Because an earthquake occurs in one place is no indication that it will be followed by another in some other quakey regions. They do not run in series, unless the changes made in the load at one point may be so great as to cause additional strain at another place sufficient to cause a break.

INTERESTING NEWS ARTICLES

BOGUS ANTIQUE IVORIES

Many returning tourists delight in having acquired antique ivories, packed in leather-covered boxes, often bearing the crest of some noble French family. They are, however, the victims of a new school of "bone sculptors" which is making Paris its centre. The "artists" are specializing in imitations of carvings executed between the ninth and sixteenth centuries. It has been found that by simply boiling in infusions of tobacco juice and an alcoholic infusion of raisin seeds or washing in hydrogen peroxide, followed by an oven treatment, it is possible to give the finest coloring of age in a short time.

PARROT TAKES GAS

George, a Panama parrot belonging to W. O. Brecken, Pittsburgh, Pa., is ill, out of sorts and wants to die.

George has a cold, and when his owner took heroic measures to rid him of the malady the parrot lost all interest in life. One day recently he was found near a gas jet unconscious, with the gas escaping into the room.

Again the next Sunday, when no person was in the studio where George is kept, he twisted the catch off his cage door with his powerful beak and a short time later Brecken entered the studio to find George "nearly all in" and stretched on his back. The gas jet was again wide open.

Now George went on a hunger strike and threw his seed can at Socrates, the erstwhile Airedale buddy.

"HOT DOGS" POPULAR WITH CUBANS

Education is a wonderful thing. Wonderful to relate, even the appetite of the Cubans may be educated, the same as their taste for racing and for the one step. Two years ago the populace of Havana had never indulged in the popular American food "hot dog."

Last year Hal Stevens, the grand stand restaurateur, introduced to the Cuban natives the "hot dogs" he serves to thousands of Polo Grounds bugs and Saratoga turf devotees, and these boys down here go to the imported diet with as much relish as their Northern neighbors.

That the "dogs" may be served in the identical way they are fished out at the Polo Grounds, Mr. Stevens imports the frankfurters, receptacles they are boiled in and even the man who serves them—D. W. Scott—from Gotham. Only the rolls are Havana products in the serving of the ever popular "hot dogs."

WATCH YOUR \$50 BILLS

A Treasury Department circular announces the discovery of a new counterfeit \$50 Federal Reserve note.

The note is on the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland, with the check letter A and face plate No. 7. The names of William G. McAdoo, Secretary of the Treasury, and John Burke, Treasurer of the United States, are signed to the note, which has a portrait of Grant.

It is a photographic production on two pieces

of paper between which silk threads have been distributed. Coloring matter has been applied to the seal and numbers on the face of the note, the back being subjected to a green toned solution. The number of the specimen is D 1050729A.

A careful examination of the face of the bill will indicate its character, as the fine lines of the lathe work are missing and in their stead in most of the border solid black appears.

CANNIBAL TRIBES ONCE OCCUPIED MISSOURI VALLEY

The bones of a thousand prehistoric cannibals are sticking out of a big hill near Blair, Neb., a few miles above Omaha. "The bones are so numerous it looks like a last year's cornfield," says Dr. Robert F. Gilder, former archaeologist of the University of Nebraska.

Dr. Gilder was called to investigate the fiend as soon as the discovery was made. He spent several days in the district but because of the frozen condition of the earth he was unable to make any excavations. So the real investigation has been postponed until spring warmth thaws the frozen ground.

Dr. Gilder was unable to determine how deeply the burials were originally made, and, furthermore, he is not sure that the bodies were not washed down to their final resting place during the prehistoric flood which caused the death of so many monsters of an early date and deposited their bodies along the Nebraska rivers and plains where they are so often dug up.

Dr. Gilder believes some other bones he has just seen near Tekamah to be similar to those he is now engaged in excavating near Bellevue, Neb., ten miles below Omaha.

In the Bellevue excavations Dr. Gilder has discovered absolute proof of cannibalism on the part of the early inhabitants of the Missouri Valley. In a number of these excavations Dr. Gilder has found piles of roasted human bones. Sometimes these bones still retain marks of implements used in scraping off the flesh. The bones were under piles of wood ashes which acted as a preservative.

Dr. Gilder has obtained permission to make excavations in a particularly fine ancient house site near his discoveries in the Bellevue district. Under the formula of Charles Darwin as to the length of time required for nature to fill excavations out in the open Dr. Gilder says this particular house was occupied when Egypt was in its glory. "At least 4,000 years have passed since this house was first occupied," says Gilder.

Curiously, Gilder has discovered that two distinct peoples, from 3,000 to 4,000 years apart, have occupied that housesite.

"As I dug downward I was rather disappointed to find that the housesite was occupied as recently as 1,000 years ago by ancestors of the Omaha and Pawnee Indians," says Dr. Gilder. "But upon going still further downward, I discovered that some 3,000 or 4,000 years before these later people lived in the house, it had been occupied by a people of a vastly different culture. The earlier people had used extremely primitive implements, which I found."

TENNYSON GREAT SMOKER

Alfred Tennyson, poet laureate of England, was a great smoker. He did not affect cigars. His joy was in a pipe of genuine Virginia tobacco. The common clay pipe was his choice. In his literary den he had a box full of white clay pipes, says the Huntington, W. Va., *Advertiser*. Filling one of these, he would smoke until it was empty, break it in twain, and throw the fragments into another box prepared for their reception. Then he would pull another pipe from its straw or wooden inclosure, fill it, light it, and destroy it as the one before. He would not smoke a pipe the second time.

But Tennyson had a great store of pipes of other styles, mostly presents from admirers and friends. The visitor had his choice, be it a hookah marghile, meersch-chaum, or dhudeen. He also was familiar with all grades of smoking tobacco, and a guest could select at will Lat-akia, Connecticut leaf, Pericute Lone Jack, Michigan, Killikinick, Highlander, or any of the English brands.

Milton was a smoker, too. When composing "Paradise Lost" it is said that he never retired for the night without first having his pipe of tobacco and a glass of water.



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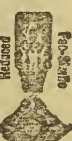


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